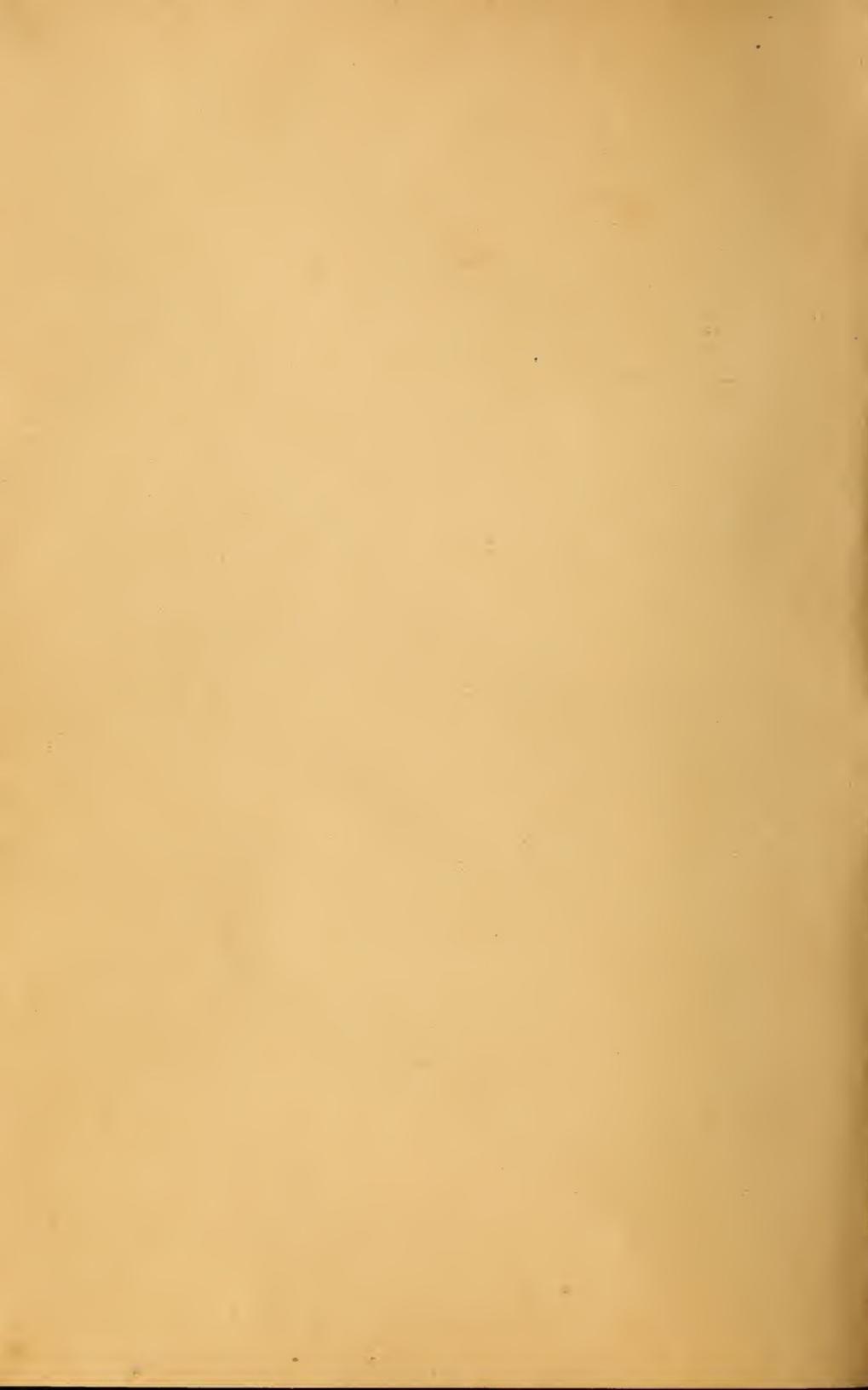


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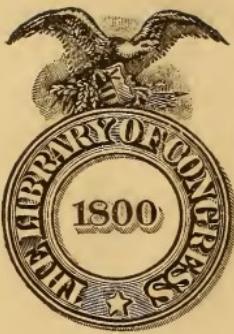
ELIJER · GOFF



HIS · CHRISTMAS · BOOK

WILLIAM · DAWES

SIMPKIN · MARSHALL & CO · LONDON



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ELIJER GOFF:

288

HIS



BY

WILLIAM DAWES,

" AUTHOR OF

"ELIJER GOFF; HIS TRAVELS, TRUBBLES, AND OTHUR AMOOZEMENTS."



LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1872.

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J. B. & C.

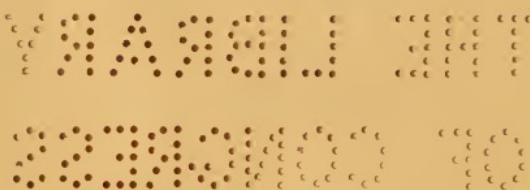
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NOTES TO THE CHRISTMAS BOOK.



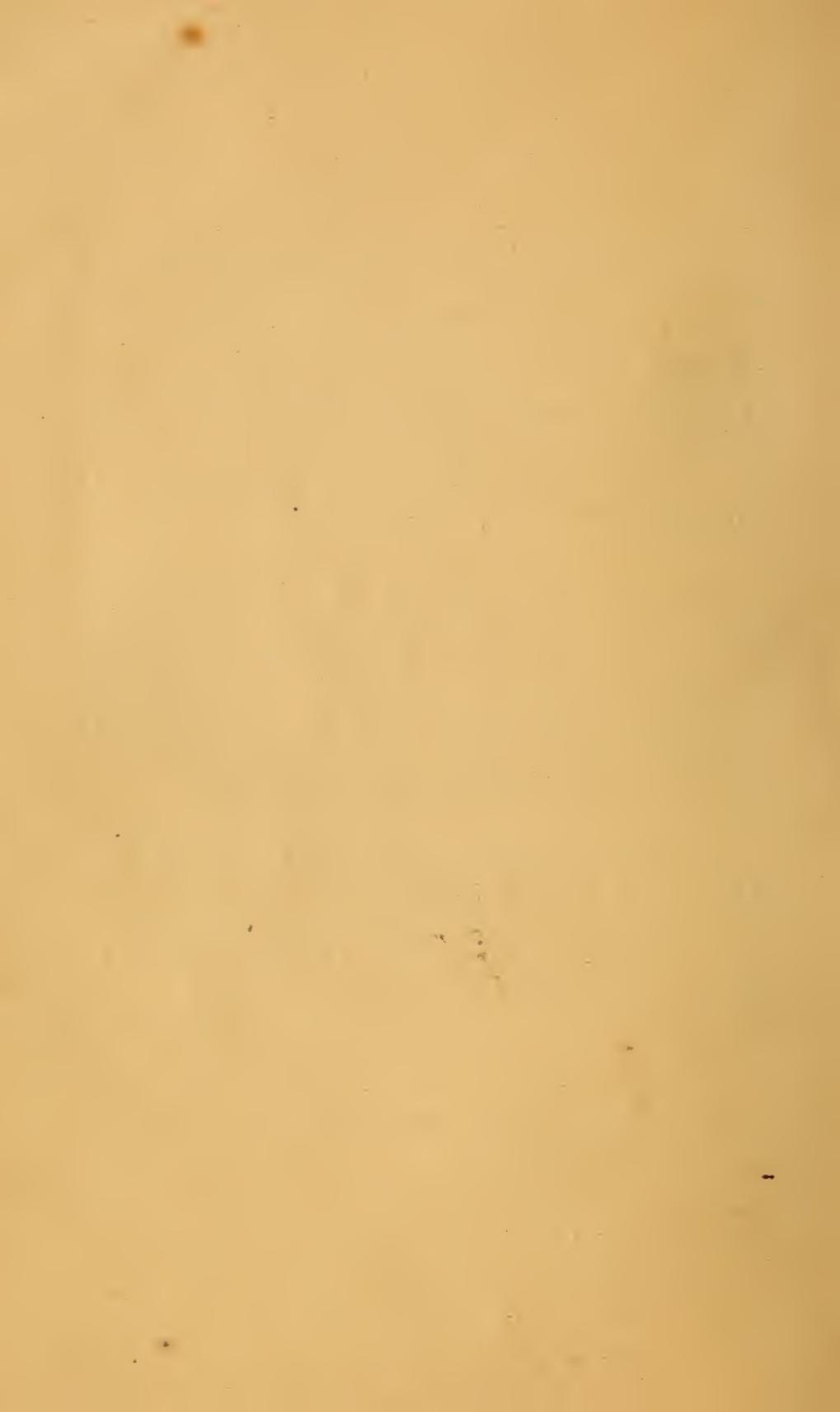
OR the information of those who have not read Elijer Goff's first book, I transfer to this page the Notes that appear in the second and third editions :—

"Elijer Goff is not an American. He was born in Gloucestershire, in 1822, and lived there for the first twenty years of his life. He then left England for the United States. During his thirty years' contact with the lower classes of Americans he has gradually become Yankeeised in speech and manner ; but beneath the surface he retains his old love for his native land, which an Englishman never lives long enough to forget."

Any readers of this Christmas book who may feel interested in Elijer Goff, will find much of the history of his earlier life in his book of "TRAVELS, TRUBBLES, AND OTHUR AMOOZEMENTS" above referred to.

W. D.

*St. Ann's Churchyard, Manchester,
November, 1872.*



P R E F I S.



ASHUNT READURS!—

This yere book is a Kristmus book, like Jonson's dikshunary, and is intended fur all time.

Them among yu as hev'nt red my "TRAVELS, TRUBBLES, AND OTHUR AMOOZEMENTS," hed better du so at onct if yu wish tu du so without delay.

Yu ken then eny gud helth, any quantity of sperits, and a merry Kristmus prevyus tu krumblin intu appy dust.

If thur's any pusson livin as konsiders this yere book wuth more than a shillin, he ken hev it at his own valuashun.

If on the otherwise he konsiders it wuth less, he ken rite wun fur hisself.

Pashunt readurs,

ADOO.

P.S.—If thur's any idears in this book as blongs tu any body eltz, he'd better klaim 'em at onct, or they will be sold tu defray expenses.

E. G.



ELIJER GOFF:

HIS

KRJSTMUS BOPK.

PART I.

FHE almanak wos purty akkerate fur the next 2 days, and the dates follerd wun another in prazeworthy rotashun. If anythin wos troor than the rest it wos the inkonstant moon ; but how she ken face up without a blush after seein whot she hez seen thru the nites of her long watchin I'm not in a pozishun tu say. But troo tu time she du kum, and she du luk down on the wicked old world, and du see the doins in the darkness and don't blush.

The days seemd very long, but they wos a bit diversified by unnatrel sensashuns ; and my attenshun

wos every now and then direktid tu some new symptom
of a rediklus natur.

After indulgin hisself with fifty years of gud animal
sperits, and a korrespondin period of miscellanyus
appetites, as hev kept up a kontinual drain on the
finanshul system, a man don't take kindly tu gastro
enteritis mukosa. Thur's sumthin about it as luks as
if his stummick wos turnin ongrateful fur parst favors,
and wosnt workin in hurmony with the sole. He
feels that in spite of hevin done all he kud tu live fur
ever, his efforts wos likely tu pruv onsukcessful; and
he begins tu think that as fur as he's koncernd eternity
is resolvin itself intu a mere questyun of time.

The evenins parst plesantly. The widder sot and
red tu me as she hed done afore, and her vise groo
sweeter, and onct I told her the nitingales hed no
chance, and that the robins wosn't in it. But I wos
sorry I sed it, fur it seemd tu stop the muzik, and a
tear kum intu her eye as she laid the book on wun
side.

A woman's hart is like a kole mine; the furder
yu go intu it the darker it gets, and if yu ventur in
tu fur the fire-damp of luv 'll be ontu yu, and yu'll
be smotherd alive.

When the books wos klosed the widder taut me chess. Fur hours we trifled with kings and queens as if they'd bin flesh and blud. At times the battels groo furyus and hot ; our gnites and bishops fote like devles ; and we muvd our kassels about till in the konfushun I kuddent find my base of operashuns. Then when all wos lost and my nobility wos beaten, and thur kassels destroyd, and everythin bustid up, the widder wud luk up iite intu my face so cheerin and komfortin that I forgot the prevyus disasters, and prepared fur another defeat.

Thurs nothin like a woman fur givin a man kurrigie. It ain't as she guvs him any greater likin fur loss of blud, but afore her he's ashAMD of bein a kowurd, and so he goes on gettin his hed krakd, till natur kindly steps in and throws up the spunge.

He's rewarded with a vus of poetry inskribed on a pavin stun.

All at onct, and quite onexpektid, kum my birth-day. It wos akkompanied with the equinokshul gales and immense loss of life. The widder persented me with a bible she hed jest bote at a fair. It lukd splendid under the naptha ; but the kontents turnd out tu be arranged sumwot loose, the bindin hevin bin

done by a pusson as wosn't interested in the subjeck. The fust 2 chapturs of Genesis wos foller'd by a treatis on bile, and Revelashuns wos perceeeded by a fu pages of loosish salms. It reminded me of a gnife I onct bote as turnd out on the follerin mornin tu be a korkskrew. The book of Jeremiar wos upside down, and Joel wos missin. The widder sed she didn't much like the front pictur. It wos Napoleon krossin the Alps. It lukked onsootabul, as the hoss wos painted green.

But they ken sell anythin under naptha.

I onct hed a stall, and sold erbs as wud kure anythin. A man as hed a stall next mine at a gud many places performd mirrikles. I've seen a lame pusson peg up slo and krukked on krutches, drink a bottle of his fizzik, and walk galey off as if nothin hed happend. I've seen that same kripple kured hunderds of times. He wos a most obstinet kase, and foller'd the doktor frum town tu town. The larst time I see him take fizzik he walkd off with a perliseman, as guv him three months fur presoomin tu be inkurable, and fur hidin his noze in another pusson's handkercher. He seemd cheerful and full of sperits.

When a man gets tuk prizner in the battel of life

he shud be so. He's treated like a jool of priceless valu. He's tuk tu the biggest bildin in the town, and karefully put away under lok and ke jest as if he wos a diament. He's kept in helth [by the doktur, is prayd at, tu, and fur by the chaplin, is waited on by the officer in charge, hez everythin kooked fur him, and isn't allowd tu pay. The anxieties of the outer world air kep frum the inside of him with grate kare ; his kloze is pervised at the kounty xpense, and air in pint of kolor and strength all that the umblest kud desire.

His kuntry 'll go furder.

They'll take his wife and childern intu another large institooshun, and give 'em all the props necessary tu support life. Sumtimes the props 'll give way, and then they'll berry the remains without pomp and without price.

I've seen it done.





PART II.

WHEN I went home i evenin I fund the house full of childern dressd fur enjymant. Fur a minit I thote Mariar hed arrived frum Utah with a konsinement bequeathd tu her by a munificent Elder. I wos on the pint of makin a forrud mvment tu the xtreme rear, when the widder stratejikally tuk me in the flank and klosed the dore.

"I've invited a party, Mr. Goff. All these childern hev fathurs and mothurs," she sed, purtily tappin her little hand on my shoulder as she saw I wos onabul tu konceal my surprige at the intelligents; "and all of them will vote fur yu," she added, smilin i of her appiest smiles, and lukkin up jyfully intu my eyes.

I stud speechless, so sed nothin.

Whot a masterpiece of a woman! She tuk my umbreller, and helped me off with my kote, and hung up my hat, and led me intu the room.

"This is Mr. Goff, my dears, kum tu romp with yu. Mind yu take gud kare of him," sed the widder, introdoocin me tu a krowd of little anjels, that klosed around me with a shout of delite, and skreamd agen in thur sweet innercent jy.

I wos overkum by the pictur, and so fur forgot my intrests as tu wish they wur all mine. Then a thote of the hearth stuns I'd seen kum tu me, and a vishun of sum women I'd knowd as hed onct been yung kum afore me, and I wonderd how much futur sufferin wos done up in them small parcels.

The childern klung tu me and larfed, and shoutid, and thur wos a regler hurrikane of jy when I kissd round the cirkle of cherry lips that seemd intendid fur the purpos.

I very ny mistuk the widder fur a child, she lukked so sweet.

Jest then a tear as I hedn't seen fur forty yeers kum intu my eye. I skarcely rekognized it, and kuddent stop it; it fell amung the golden hair, and I felt as if a long fastend up feelin wos bustin out frum my hart.

I seemd tu be tastin summot int age as I shud hev tastid in youth.

Fur the fust time in my life I hed privat reasons fur bleevin I wos a wastid man.

But then we romped as the widder hed announced, and thur wos seryus riotin, and I wos made a perliseman of the civil forse, and wos thurfore illtreatid, and wos finelly lockd up in a kubberd tu the satisfakshun of all koncernd. Then I bustid out frum my kaptivity and kapturd all the rioters, and sentenced 'em tu apples and pears and nut krackin, but they only larfed at the punishment, and astur it wos over they begun riotin as bad as ever. Then I konverted the kitchin intu a reformatory till they begun tu steal the jam and get sticky with treakle, and the widder interfered jest as I wos assistin in a bad kase of gingerbred larcency. We wos all turnd out of the kitchin, and I wos dismist frum the forse.

My disgrace weighd hevy on me. I lay down in a korner of the room, and wos mercifully hidden frum the vulgar gaze by a table-kloth. Then kontrary tu my own opinyuns I wos pronounced ded by a tiny little doktur as examined me with a walkin stik. Thur wos a gud deal of larfin durin the berrial service, and

the korpse very ny kalled sum of 'em tu ordur. At larst it wos over, and they erektid a splendid monyment of furniture over my rottin remains.

I wos, however, miraklusly restord tu life by a bold but simple operashun with a kommon pin. A korpse must hev bin ded sum time as kud stand the test. It made me rear up in full bloom.

Then they klimed upon my shoulders, and krawld between my legs, and pickd my pockets, and tickled me with fethers, and smokd my pipe, and got lost in my hat ; and then we playd blind man's buff, and puss in the korner, and hide and seek, till I fund a man hezn't fizzikle strength enuff tu be a child.

The widder wos as appy as the childern. She playd with 'em in a jentle way they liked ; she told 'em storys they loved tu hear ; she fed 'em with things they hed longed fur ; she nussed 'em when they wur tired ; and folded 'em up warm when they went home.

I never see so many hours of happiness krammd intu so short a time.

That nite when the childern hed gone, and we sot alone, the widder sed it wos a pity I hed none of my own, as I wos so fond of 'em.

I sed it wos, and I felt a bit sad ; but twoz tu late
tu begin now.

"All things air possibbul," she said devoutly.

I lukked at her inkwirin ; but she went on with her
sewin and sed no more.

I smokd my pipe in silents, as I lukked back intu
my life, and fund it hedn't bin whot it mite hev bin ;
and that I hedn't done whot I mite hev done ; and as
I lukked at the sweet face of the widder bendin karmly
over her work, I wishd that Utah, and all that it
kontained, kud be' struk out frum the map.





PART III.



HE women stud by me tu a man.

How troo a woman's instincks air ! I nussed thur babies, I playd with thur childern, and kissed 'em ; and with alarmin inakkeracy I told thur husbands that I envied 'em. Every mothur thurfore sed I wos a fit and proper pusson tu represent 'em in parlyment.

I addressed a meetin komposed entirely of women. They wore yaller ribbons, and brote refreshments. They seemd pleased tu see me. Sum of thur perlitkle remarks indoosd me tu bleeve they'd bin marrid sum time. The speeches didn't appear in print, as the reporters sed they kudn't hear a word as wos sed in konsequence of the babies, and the variety of subjecks bein diskussd at the same time by the aujience.

Kanvassin fur votes wos, however, attended with sum danger. Wun nite I wos lukkin fur a konstitoont when I suddenly fund myself in a entry. Sez I, "Elijer, respekted sir: if it gets much darker thur'll be no daylite left fur tumorrer; yu'd better turn back prevyus tu bein murderd."

I wos in the act of wheelin round on this timely advice, when I kum in kontack with a warm substants, as appeerd tu be the main body of a female woman. Afore I kud kall assistants a pair of arms wos throwd round my neck with grate akkeracy, and 'I wos pashunetly kissed by sum pusson or pussons onknown. My presents of mind fur the moment fursook me. It wud hev bin a tryin moment fur a member of parliment. I hedn't time tu xtrikate myself frum the orful mistake when—

"Sammy, my luv!" sed the plump apparishun, in a sweet tone; "I'm so glad yu've kum. It seems yeers sintz we met."

"Sentrysts," I murmur'd, in low, soothin tones, not wishin tu kause tu suddent a shok.

"How stout yuve growd!" she xclaimed in a surpriged vise, as she run her hands round my dimenshuns.

"It's greef," I sed, with a long sigh, as I tuk hold of her hands tu keep 'em frum gettin intu furder mischief.

"Greef!" she repeated. "Hev yu bin upset?"

"Yes," I sez, "like koles, and freqwent."

"Poor Sammy!" she murmur'd, puttin her cheek klose tu mine, and leanin agenst me with natrel grace. "Yu wont leave me agen?"

"Never!" I ejackerlated, losin myself in the part I wos takin, and never thinkin of the fearful effex of my spereted utterents.

"Then I am yures fur ever!" she xclaimed, with alarmin liberality, as she onct more folded me in her luvin arms.

It wos *very* dark. That's the wust of darkness; it's so easy tu make a mistake.

At larst I konsiderd it proudent tu brake the spell jently; so I sed, "Luvly maiden, hev yu ever heard of Elijer?"

"Yes," she sez. "He wos a profit."

"Indeed," I sez. "Wos he in the ile and drug line?"

"Don't be foolish, Sam. It's wicked," sed the maiden.

I stud reproved fur sevrel minits, thinkin whot tu say.

Then I venturd another interrogashun, with a voo tu establish my identity.

"Did he du bizness in Ameriky?" I whisperd.

I don't think Samuel kud hev whisperd in the same tones as I did. I fund her arms relax thur hold, and her cheek lift up frum off my brest, and her hands go klean away. Then thur was a rattlin of keys in her pocket, and a gratin of summot hard on summot ruff, and——the maiden hed struck a lite.

Tu say as I lukked gilty wud be sayin komparatively nothin. Tu say as she turnd silent wud be a mere naked figger of speech. Tu say as I hurrid home wud give no adequate noshun of the velocity of my muvments. I felt like a bird of passige. But innercence ken fly as well as gilt.

When I alited in site of our house I drew up and formd myself intu a solum percesshun, and walkd as 1 man.

The widder sed I lukkd warm.

"Yes," I sez. "Kanvassin fur votes 'll open the pores as well as anythin I've yet diskoverd."

"Hev yu bin sukcessful?" she asked, with a sweet
luk as sounded like a reproach.

"Modrely," I answerd. "I've hed a purty gud
run this evenin."

"That's rite," she ejakerlated. "Kum and sit
down. Supper's qwite reddy."

And I sot down, and forgot all about the prevyus
akcident, fur the widder's face wos full of smiles, and
her eyes wur full of lite, and her words wur full of
hope, and all the darkness seemd tu hev bin left
outside in the street.





PART IV.

NOMINASHUN day arrived with a punk-tootality as mite be ekwalld but never surparst. Every livin thing seemd tu be on the alert. Perlitikle maxims flutterd in the breeze, and the evans went in a plumper fur bloo. Thur wosn't a yaller kloud tu be seen. Natur seemd tu be ded agenst us. Bizness subsided intu a blind standstill fur sevrel hours. The kloks didn't seem tu be intrested in politicks, so went on chuckin thur moments away as if thur wud never be any end tu 'em. I kan't say how fur thur idears 'll tally with the aktool fax, not bein in the sekret ; but it wos kwite purty tu see 'em goin on in thur pashunt perseverin way. 1 klock 'll never allow hisself tu be infloonced by anothur. He goes on strikin out his

privet opinyuns. It don't matter tu him if he's an hour or tu rong ; he sez everythin he's got tu say with a desishun as 'll admit of no kontradikshun.

Kloks air very like politishuns in this respeck.

At the appinted hour, a yaller karrige drawd up at the dore.* The hosses wore yaller harness, and the koachman wos, simlerly kaparisond. Thur wos a tremenjus krowd of childern kollekted round the perlitkle charyut. I kum pomply forth amid the cheers of the multitood, and wos instantly whirld off frum thur admirin gaze.

I started frum my peaceful home that mornin with a yaller silk handkercher and the best intenshuns. On my return the yaller handkercher wos missin. The best intenshuns wosn't rekwired, and I wos allowd tu bring 'em home.

When we enterd the hall thur wos tremenjus shouts, groans enuff tu stock a battel field, and pussonel remarks of the most revoltin natur. The blessins resultin frum freedum of speech wos obvyus. The perlisemen kept karryin 'em out.

* This 'eres kwite a akcidental drop down intu poetry, not bein intenshunal.

The inkwiries after my departed mothur wur noomerus tu a fault. They didn't appeer tu realize she wos no more. I rekomended sum of 'em tu go and make thur inkwiries intu anothur sphere. I wos formally persented with an onooshally hard tater under the left year.

As an artikel of nurishment a tater is vallybul tu the human race, but fur xternal applikashun the human race is as well without 'em. I konsider 'em onsootabul fur perlitkle purposes.

I wos proposed and sekonded, and the show of dirty hands wos in my favor. The speeches wosn't heard, but appeerd at full length in the papers, notwithstanding the reporters wos upset and very ny boled out at the beginnin.

My speech meshurd about 2 fut 6, and kontained a gud many idears I'd never heard afore. Reporters ken sumtimes read a pusson's thotes better than he ken hisself. Luk at the parlymentry speeches, and then hear 'em. Thurs no komparison between 'em. It's a pity they aint red out of the noosepapers instead of bein red intu 'em.



PART V.

AT larst the elekshun day set in. The mornin
bruks in a manner as kuddent be mended, and
the face of natur bore no trace of prevyus sufferin.
The air was barmy, fur the sun wos risin in the yeast.*
It shon more in sorrer than in anger. The sparrers
twitterd and chatterd as if they'd all got votes, and
the men with warnuts yelled like skalpers.

Charyuts kum rollin in with thur frates of luvly
women and brave men. They wur dressd more or
less. The kostooms wos varyus—sum hed trowsurs
with **i** leg, othurs hed legs with **i** trowsur;
sum wos perfekly armless, sum hed overwelmin
grate kotes, othurs hed hats as throwd a shadder like
a U tree. Still *all* on 'em wos dressd, and wore

* This wos onct an original joak.

ribbons and hevy sticks ; and every 1 brote his, her, or its vise with 'em fur the publik benefit.

Thur wos sum as represented big drums, sum as skreamd like fiddles ; vises as kum up frum the bottom button of the weskit, and vises as wheezed out frum no whur pertikler. Thur wos muzishuns as hed perlitikle opinyuns, and muzishuns as hedn't. A German float as kept hisself warm by runnin up the roomatic skale, and a German band as demi semi shiverd in the mornin air. The drums didn't kum out till the battel wos over.

Yu kan't perswade a big drum. It gives a decided opinyun at the start, and it sounds the same note at the finish. It's the most biggoted instrooment as ever fund its way intu a band. I onct resided in 1 fur a short time. It wos at a speritool meetin. 1 of the sperits nokked me on the hed with a gittar. I demanded satisfakshun, and wos instantly akkommodated by another sperit asakkosted me with grate vilance. I've no furder rekollekshun of that nite beyond wakin up in a busted drum as stud in 1 korner of the room.

Our arrangements wos very komplete. Thur wosn't a lokal prize fiter or a brave barge mariner as hedn't

sum perlitkle mishun. They performd thur dooty with a zeal and simplicity as wos quite touchin, kon-sidering they hedn't votes. They kudn't hev drunk more fur the kause if they'd bin blessed with the franchise.

My proud sperit flutterd out of bed with the sun, and swooped early intu town.

I wos well receeved with cheers blended harmoniusly with grones, stuns, etsettery. I bleeve bad eggs air plentiful in these parts.

A man kan't go intu parlyment with klean hands, he hez tu shake so many durty 'uns.

Jenrally speakin, a gud shake of a frendly hand is fizzick I'm parshul tu; it does merrikles, and don't interfere with our ordnery funkshuns ; but I'd as soon shake hands with the infirmary klok as with sum peple. They don't muv in my cirkle—never.

Wun of my konstitoonts as kuddent be rekognised without the aid of sope, treated me like a brothur. He lukked black, but he sed he wos yaller tu the bakbone, and wos prepared tu go on votin fur me till he kuddent see. He'd voted twice alreddy, and when I met him he was perceedin tu rekord his perlitkle konvikshuns onct more. He sed a gud many on 'em hed bin

follerin his example, and, with the aid of a few ded 'uns, Elijer Goff wud be at the hed of the pole.

Here he tuk off his hat and shouted "Hip-pip-hikkup-hooray." Then he wos silent, and his hed lobbed about as if it wos tu loose in the socket.

He wos thinkin ovur a grevance. "Luk here!" he sez, klosin his eyes and trajerkally holdin out his hand, "none o' them bloos wud touch that, and why?" and his hed dropt on tu his dikky.

"It don't luk temptin," I answerd.

"It's 'onest," he sed with a bust of indignashun.

"But it aint klean," I replide. "Hev yu guv sope and water a fair trial?"

"Yes," he sed doggedly, "I hev."

"Then try sum openin medsin tu help the pores," I sed. "Yu kan't expekt Natur tu wurk it all off without assistants."

"Tu late! tu late!" he mutterd savigly. "They hev shund the profferd hand, and now my principuls is yaller fur ever."

"Kobwebs," I sed majesterkally, "stand troo tu yure kolours, but don't kram yureself with delooshuns. Yu've bin mixin sperits with yure politiks, and they've fermented. Sort yure frends, and use plenty of sope.

Don't push yure fist under everybody's nose. Yu ain't as big as them as ken guv yu tu in fiv^e up fur size, nor so gud as them as hev hed twenty yeers' start on the rite road. Every man hez his fitin wate, and every woman her reserve bid. Even childern 'll vote krukked in front of lollypops."

"Whot're yu goin tu stand?" he asked, after pawsin tu get at the meanin of my remarks. "I've jest 1 more vote as is open tu a resonabul offer," and he nodded familiarly at my weskit sideways.

I lukked at him in sorrerful silents.

Fur a minit he seemed tu forget whur he wos; then suddenly remembrin, he seezed my hand, and holdin it in both his own, he gurgled, "Elijer, my frend, a pint of 'arf-'n-'arf 'll du it. I kan't say no fairer perlilikly," and he lost his balance. A perliseman fund it fur him, and they went home arm in arm.

As I stud lukkin at the politishun and the majesty of the law pursooin thur zig-zag direkshun in the distants, I fund anothur politishun helpin hisself tu my watch. I turnd round on him with as quick a suddentness as bekum the okkashun, and I sez, "My luvly konstitoont, astur yu with that sundile. Yu're out of yure turn," and I ketched him by the skust of

his koller and shuk him. He appeerd surpriged at his mistake, and appealed tu me not tu choke him, as he wos a Librel, and hed'nt yet parted with his vote.

I lukked at him rebookinly at arm's length, and I sez, "Hev yu any approximet idear of the alarmin konsequences of yure komplaint?"

He answerd the questyun by droppin on his gnees. He sed he'd a wife and childern dependin on him fur support.

"Yu kan't get a honest livin fur 'em by stealin," I sez sternly. "Thur's tu much kompetishun in that line, pertikly in the retail. Sukcess 'll bring a handkercher or a ornament, but failure is follerd by kaptivity, slops, stun-krackin, and othur prizin amoozements. It wos never intended that a man shud walk about doin nothin, warmin his hands in othur peple's pockets."

He sed he wos very poor.

"Poor!" I sez. "A man is never poor when he hez helth to work, and a wife tu luv, and childern tu klimb ontu his gnees; nor ken a man be rich if he hez neither."

He appeerd tu be a man of mean temperature. He sed he wos a orfan. No mothur or fathur hed ever suckled *him*. His mothur, the only wun he ever

hed, died without seein him. His fathur was involvd in konsiderabul obskoority. When qwite an infant he wos deposited in the buzzum of anothur family simlerly destitoot with regard tu fathurs, and ultimety handed down tu posterity thru the mejium of a charitabul institooshun.

I askd him whot his perlilikle opinyuns amounted tu in round numbers.

He sed he wos yaller, and wud vote fur me if I'd let him go and stir up tupennorth of jin with arf-a-krown.

I kalled him a mass of bribery and korrupshun, and wos perceedin tu make a fu kopyus remarks when a perliseman kum tu his assistants.

When he stud in the dok he wos sober, and sed it wos all thru drink. He sed if the churches hed allis bin open like the publik-houses he shud hev bin a bettur man. As it wos, he wos marrid and hed a family, with no visibul means of livin without work.

They lukkd after *his* intrests fur three months.

Perlitikle dooties quicken thurst more than anythin I ever seen. Peple kuddent stand the franchise if the publik-houses wos klosed. Yu kuddent get pussons tu du all the dirty work if yu didn't give 'em summot

besides water tu wash in ; and nothin weaker than hot sperits wud swill down the perlitikle parts of speech on an elekshun day. They're downrite klaggy.

I've herd a gud many dialekts in my time, but the perlitikle dialekt squatches all. A politishun's lang-widge 'll admit of no deskripshun, as it don't luk well in print : but fur givin an idear of the warmth of his feelins, I shud say it wud admit of no impruvment this side the grave.

The bonesetters hed a hevy day. They hed tu settle a gud many grevances, and tu adjust a gud many perlitikle dislokashuns. I've knowd a gud many patriots. I'm indoosed tu bleeve patriotism begins at home. Party feelin begins anywhur. It runs highest amung them as don't kno whot they're fitin fur. Questyuns that shud be settled by the brain air jenrally settled by the body, the justis of a perlitikle kause bein mostly determind by the number of injuries the respektive partis ken stand. If it's a diskusshun between kings and queens it's konsiderd etyket tu spill the blud and berry the bones of thousands ; but if it's between 2 ordnery peple, a fu benefishul drops frum 1 noze, or a black eye, is

konsiderd an ample apolojy, and at onct decides who's rite.

Thur wos a gud many argymnts of that sort durin the day. Sum of 'em kum under my immejut notis. 1 man objekted tu a broken hed, on the rediklus ground that he didn't like it. His only kumfurt appeerd tu be that he'd korrected a few errors on the othur side. Anothur konsiderd that his frunt teeth hed sumthin tu du with the gud of his kuntry, and he seemd sorry he'd lost 'em ; and a kole-heaver went so fur as tu xpress his determinashun tu endure everlastin kombustshun if he didn't avenge an indignity as hed kum tu him in the form of a bloo swellin under the left eye.

Thur wos a gud deal of natrel perlitenes amung 'em. I see 1 man hit anothur an invitashun tu sit down, which he did. He got up and let out a simler kompliment frum the rite shoulder. They wos both very much siled, and parted in a frendly way, kallin 1 anothur by thur unkrystyin names.

But peple seemd stun blind tu my intrests. I lent myself fur perlitikle purposes, and wos returnd tu my frends by a overwhelmin minority. My principul supporters wos sévrel times upset by the noose of our

triumfant defeat, and tords bed time thur disappoint-
ment got the better of 'em. Sum of the workin
klasses fair totterd under thur load, and wos evidently
staggerd by the state of the pole. I met with a gud
deal of kindness frum sum of 'em. 1 man kordially
shuk me by the hair. I bleeve they tuk him tu the
infirmry. It wos understud he hed met with a akcident,
and hed a rush of blud tu the noze.

When it wos knowd that I wos outnumberd, and
that the bloos hed karrid thur viktim in triumf, I
stud out on the balkony tu address the krowd.

Tu say as I wos wärmly receeved wudn't du justis
tu the aktool fax. Thür's no word in the English
langwidge as kud.

When yu introodoos stuns and sticks intu any
langwidge it bekums more forcibul. Even rotten
eggs 'll impart sum addishunal beauty.

I lukked down the throtes of the thousands as
turnd up thur faces with open mouths and glarin
eyes, as if I wos gud tu eat, and wos about tu be
distribooted among 'em. 'Twud hev bin a dredful
moment fur a erly Kristyun. I tried tu chuck a fu
words intu 'em to be goin on with, but they refoozed
'em, and howled and hooted like zoologikles at feedin

time. Then all at onct thur kum on a hevy shower of rain, stuns, eggs, hail, warnuts, and the wust froots of the erth. I never see the elements so noomerus. Fur a fu minits we wos obliged tu get under kover. Umbrellas mite du in times of peace, but on an elekshun day they air nowhur.

When the storm hed sumwot subsided, wun of my frends handed me a speakin trumpet, and I thanked 'em thru that fur the honor I'd done 'em that day. As I'd nothin tu lose, I blowd 'em up thru the trumpet fur tryin tu imitate wild beests in vise and manner as they hed bin doin, and fur sayin a gud many things as a wild beest wudn't sile his mouth with. "But yu kan't humbug Natur," I sez. "If yu abooze the present the futur 'll be down on yu afore yu kno whur yu air. Thur's a fixed proporshun fur penalties, and yu kan't get off by payin 6 pence in the pound. I've nevur knowd natrel retribooshun miss fire. Sum of yu don't kno this, and konduct yureselves like ostriches. When yu've done summot rong, yu stick yure heds in a hole and think yu're out of site ; but you'll soon wish yure kote-tales wos longur and strongur, fur Natur kicks ard. Thur's no kases of mistaken identity in stummick akes."

Sum of yure fathers walked 8 miles tu work of a mornin, and 8 miles back tu bed, astur 12 hours of hot sunshine on thur bent baks, and eat and drunk and karrid red cheeks, and sed thur prayers fur ny a hunderd yeers, and then died ard, blessin a krowd of sorrerin grate-grandchildern. *Yu'll* nevur see yure childern's childern. Yu shorten yure hours of labor and yure hours of life. Yu're more dissatisfide with more wages than they wur with less. Yu're up latur in the mornin, and up latur at nite. Yu burn tu much gas."

Jest then a egg as hed a narrer eskape of bein a warbler flu intu the trumpet, and stopped my speech ; and anothur storm kum on hevyur than evur, and bruk all the winders. My frends pulled me in by the kote-tales, and kondukted me home stratejikally thru the bak dore, while the perlitikle tempest wos thunderin in at the front.





PART VI.

HE follerin Sunday arternoon, as I wos
stumblin amung the graves whur I wos
born, I met with the lamented bones of a ancestrur.
Thur wos a heap of 'em lyin under a broken stun, as
hed a broken inskripshun. * * "neezur Goff" wos
mercifully left on wun ȝ kornerd fragment. On
anotherirreglar piece of the same stun wos the solum
words, "7 wives."

I stud uprite in admirashun.

"That wos a man, if yu like!" sez the old parish
grave skooper, hobblin up and turnin over a bone
with his stik. "*I* berrid him."

"How is it as he's workd his way to the surface?"
I inkwired.

"Workd his way tu the surface," he repeated with evident impashunts. "Why it's a wunder he hezn't workd his way klean out, and jined hisself tugether agen, and walkd off. Thur's no less nor 7 wives under *him*," he added, as if he was tryin tu konvince hisself as well as me. "I knowd he'd never keep down amung 'em."

"He must hev bin parshul tu wives," I sez.

"Parshul," he sez; "twoz his hobby. He wos ded on 'em; and so he is now," he added, chucklin over the solum joak.

"Irreverend sir," I sez, addressin the anshunt dignitary of the church, "I've privet resons fur bleevin them bones blong tu me."

"Blong tu yu?" he sed, inkredulus, with surprige. "How many sets of bones du yu reqwire in this wurld?"

"I bleeve furder," I sez, not noticin his questyun, "that these bones wos orijinally a unkle of mine, and that when in the flesh they walkd about in the kapacity of my father's brother."

"What name hev yu bin nurished under?" he askd, plantin his stick in the ground in a attitood of interrogashun.

"Elijer Goff's my image and superskipshun," I sez, with bekomin pride, "and long may it keep klear of a tomb stun."

"Amen!" he ejakerlated, frum the mere forse of habit; then suddenly seizin hold of my hand he sed exultinly, "I'm proud tu say I berrid yure fathur, and I berrid yure mothur; and —— in fak I berrid the whole bilin."

"Praps yu'd like tu berry me?" I sez, thinkin it as well tu pass the kompliment. He sed he'd knowd more onliklier things, and hoped as he mite be spared tu perform the sad office.

I told him thur wos no immejut hurry. He sed, "No, thur *wosn't* no hurry," in a quiet pashunt way, as led me tu konklood he wos gud fur another sentry.

On his rekkomendashun we went intu his old ancestrul kottage, and smokd a pipe tugethur. He knowd the histry of the noomerus Goffs frum the preface tu the printer's name. They appeer tu hev bin much given tu marryin, and as fur as possibul strongly opposd tu dyin. They didn't advokate temprance, but tuk kindly tu superstishun, bleevin that a surplis allis kovers a gud man, and that Britons

never will be slaves. Between 'em they managed a kristnin almost monthly, and wos never knowd tu get tired of biled turkey and jin. Sum of 'em seemd tu think they kud get on without the Ten Kommandments, and lukked upon laws as onnecesarry luxuries. A fu on 'em went so fur as tu luk forrud hopefully tu a thousand yeers of peace.

The worms seemd tu relish *them* jest the same as if they'd bin pussons with a moderet taste.

Old Ebneezur (now bones) wos a man of enormus affeckshuns. He led seven blushin brides tu the altur afore natur konsiderd he'd made suffishent atonement fur bustin intu life.

In spite of all these blessins he died ard.

I wos sorry fur him, and at onct put him down fur a new tombstun. The old grave skooper sed he'd see it wos propurly donc. I left the inskripshun tu him, as he'd more xperients in skriptural histories, and understud the subjeck thru.

When that tombstun wos finishd it bore the follerin

EPITAFF.

Ebhneeznr Goff,

Born in Hope.

Died in the Workhus.

(bein qwite ripe.)

He wos a honest man and a noomerus father.

He hed 7 wives, and wos respekteed by all as
knu him.

He wos mortally wounded at Bunker's Hill,

And aftur lingerin in the enjymnt of gud helth
fur ny 50 years

HE DIED,

And lies here

DED.

He wos well known at all charitabul institooshuns,
till deth guv him permnent relief.

As a parish konstabul, krier, and klark, he onct stud
onrivalde;

And bein freqwently marrid, his virtu remained
unshaken tu the end.



PART VII.

HE'D finishd T, and hed lit my pipe, wun blusterin evenin, astur a busy day, and wos sittin with my feet on the fender, talkin tu the widder, when thur kum a feeble nok at the frunt dore as indoosd the widder tu exklame, "I wonder who that ken be?"

"Nobody with any kontribooshuns fur *my* poor's box, I'll be bound," I sez, goin on with my pipe.

The widder went tu open the dore, and in a fu minits returnd, bearin in her arms a brown parcel, and in her hand a note.

"A little boy brote these fur yu," she sed, handin 'em tu me jently, and lukkin very kuryus and purty as I purceeded tu open 'em.

The letter not bein' a bloo 'un lukked innercent enuff, but the parcel hed a mistryus and furbiddin

appeerunts. I opend the letter fust. It red as follers :—

“ DEAR LIJER,—

“ I’ve jest kum intu onxpekteed posseshun of sum rubbige. It’s no use tu me, not bein littry. I thurfore send *yu* a bundel of it. Yu ken make whot use yu like on it, as the man as rote it’s ded. He died in the sylum. They sed he wos a promisin yung man. He promisd tu pay *me*, but never did. I hed tu seeze his bits o’ things, tho I didn’t want tu ; but he sed if *I* didn’t sumbody eltz wud ; so I seezd ’em. I wos a bit sorry fur him, but a landlud kan’t afford many feelins fur individool kases. He hez tu spred ’em ovur so many. Rent days air very exhostin in this respek.

“ Yures stedfustly,

“ SILAS JERRYBIM.

“ P.S.—How is it as yu hevn’t bin tu service at the Bore and Pigskin lately? I hope yu hevn’t lost all appetite fur thurst.”

“ It’s kind of Jerrybim tu send me rubbige,” I sez, turnin ovur the parcel tu find the gnot ; “ but let’s see

whot the sed rubbige is kompozed of. Jerrybim isn't a vagabone as a rool."

We opend the parcel, and fund the rubbige in 8 small packets of paper, named, and dated, and sealed.

"It'll take me a sentry of Sabbath days to read all on 'em," I sez. "Whot on erth and oshun ken they be about? Sum on it luks like poetry," I added, lukkin down intu 1 of the smallest packets, and purceedin tu open it.

"Shall I read them tu yu, Mr. Goff, while yu go on with yure pipe?" askd the widder, eagerly. "I'm fond of readin."

"Air yu?" I sez, in a artful tone of surprige. "Certinly yu may. I kud sit down and listen tu yu fur the remainder of my natrel life," and I handed ovur the packets, and settled down intu a pozishun of komfortabul attenshun, and smoked.

Whot a evanly posseshun is a brite and appy woman. Evanly even in the purpel distants.

The widder wos as pleased as if I'd done her a kindness. She put away her work, drew her chair up tu the fire, and guv a playful little koff. Then takin up the packets and arrangin them beside her, perceeeded tu read 'em as they wos numberd.

The fust wos No. 1, and red as follers:—

LOLALEA.
—

LL down among the lilies by the old brook's
rugged side,
Where the long grass fondly droops to kiss
the wave,
Where blossoms, sweet and fair, with their incense
fill the air,
And new beauty springs again from Beauty's grave :

'Twas here among the lilies in the green and silent
glade,
Where the birds have sung their sweetest songs of joy,
Beneath this old yew tree, ere I met with Lolalea,
That I dreamed in happy moments when a boy.

Time fled, and other lilies came, and faded with the
years,
And my childhood glided from me like a dream ;
Then my loving Lolalea, like an angel came to me,
And we gave sweet vows of love beside the stream.

And O ! among the lilies, as the years flew quickly past,
Fair young faces like my Lolalea's came by,
And in every cherub face, her own I loved to trace,
For I loved her with a love that could not die.

* * * * *

Once more among the lilies that are fading by the brook,
I sit dreaming 'neath the yew tree as of yore,
But dreams of joy have fled, for sweet Lolalea is dead,
And the music of her voice will come no more.

Ah ! bloom again, ye lilies, and flow on, sweet sobbing stream,
Sing here once again, ye birds, your song to me,
But warble not with joy, as I heard ye when a boy,
For yé're singing o'er the grave of Lolalea.

The widder laid down the paper and put her handkercher tu her eyes. The vusses hed made her sad.

“Don’t let ‘em upset yu,” I sez, gulpin down my own feelins. “It’s only his fun. He didn’t mean it.

Thur's no *real* poetry rote now a days; it's all adulterated with money makin,'" I added, thinkin tu konvince her furder.

"But he must hev dearly luv'd Lolalea," she sed, lukkin at me thru 2 big tears.

"It don't allis foller," I replide. "Luv's very much like everythin eltz as don't resemble it; them as talks the most does the least."

"But luk at the paper," she sed, handin it tu me; "it's bin blotted with his tears."

"Its jest as likely tu hev bin blotted with jin and water," I sez, rememburin sevrel poets I hed met in times parst as hed divided thur idears with sperits.

"Oh, no! He kuddent hev bin a bad man to rite so tendurly of his ded luv," she sez, lukkin at me as if implorin me not tu disturb her bleef in his gudness.

It wud be a blessed thing if all men wur whot innercent women bleeve 'em tu be.

But they ain't.

I returnd the widder's luk with a sigh, and handed her packet No. 2. It wos hedded, "My First Vapour Bath," and appeerd tu hev bin rote sum time.



MY FIRST VAPOUR BATH.

MY doctor is a despot. He presides over a court beyond which there is no appeal. I should as soon think of declining to fall in with the views of her Majesty's Government on a question of income-tax as I should think of disobeying one of his mandates. He does not impose a term of imprisonment with the option of a fine, but he suspends my freedom and substitutes physic for food. He does not define my case as one requiring a retributive "five bob or a week ;" but he throws my stomach into a state of anarchy, and smiles blandly at the agonising process. He covers scraps of paper with unintelligible hieroglyphics, and bids me confidently swallow what he has thereon mysteriously specified, and submis-

sively carry out what he has thereon illegibly commanded. If I, in my feeble state of physical prostration, suggest a more merciful treatment, he opens the door and sorrowfully wishes me good-bye, as if I was about to step into the grave and be no more seen.

One day rheumatism got hold of me, and I sought his aid. "Take a vapour bath and rub that in," he said in an indifferent, off-hand way, as he handed me the prescription he had prepared.

"A vapour bath," I faltered timidly, in a voice husky with anxiety and broken with horrible rheumatic twistings. "Will not a warm bath do as well, doctor?"

"Decidedly not," he replied in cold, cruel, remorseless tones. "You must have the vapour bath at once; and I will see you again in two days. Good morning."

The last words were said more cheerfully, and were accompanied by a warm, reassuring pressure of the hand. I glided out into the sunshine.

There was no grave outside the doorstep, as I almost feared; but I had a kind of presentiment that I was walking towards one, and I felt convinced, too, that any violation of the illegible statutes on the

paper in my hand would be followed by disastrous consequences.

I had never experienced the pleasures, or the pains, of a vapour bath, and knew nothing of the process. I had heard them spoken of as being invaluable in some kinds of disease, and I had read in certain advertisements that, for the insignificant sum of eighteenpence, a person might be operated on by steam to any extent. There my knowledge began and there it ended. As to the mode of administering the vapour I knew nothing. If the attendant had taken off my clothes, and had suspended me over the steam of a boiling tea-kettle, I have not the slightest hesitation in affirming that I should have had entire confidence in the efficacy of the system, and should have submitted with the conviction that it was operating beneficially. If he had bidden me sit on a saucepan of boiling water, and had beguiled me with an old newspaper, I should have meekly complied with his instructions, and have remained faithfully at my post until ordered off. Still I believed, as I left the chemist's shop (in which I had deposited the hieroglyphics) with the bottle of liniment in my pocket, and groaned myself into a cab, that I was

being hurried off to a very different and far more trying ordeal.

I began to anticipate the process.

In my simplicity I imagined myself in a room, thick and hot with steam, sitting dejectedly in a corner, and simmering down to a required state of skin and bone. And I thought, too, that in that same chamber of hot vapour there were other victims also, sitting sad and motionless as myself, and looking very dim through the thick haze, patiently awaiting the dissolving of their bodies and the ultimate bleaching of their bones; for it seemed to me that subsequently the bones would manifest themselves in a remonstrative way. Then, with livid cheeks, I contemplated the return home of cadaverous faces and weak legs to the sorrowing friends who anxiously awaited such portions of our substance as we might be prudent, or fortunate, enough to retain. And I tremblingly wondered what Mrs. Simpson would say when she saw my sunken cheeks and collapsed form return to its post at the head of the table; and also what the chubby and cherry-cheeked little Simpsons would think when they saw, with their young impatient eyes, my feeble attempts to carve the Sunday joint, and witnessed my

abortive endeavours to look paternally substantial and dignified. I remembered that John Ruskin had said something about age losing its honour and youth its reverence, and I became concerned lest the reverential feeling should depart from the bosoms of the youthful Simpsons when they realised the dreadful reduction that had taken place in the person of their sire.

I was beginning to tremble with anxiety.

The desirability of turning back presented itself to me with irresistible force as the cab drew up in front of the establishment that contained my imaginary chambers of horrors. I glanced helplessly at the painted sign that suggested various modes of refined torture. There was the Russian suffocating method, the Turkish simmering process, and the melting down in hot vapours. There were hot miseries and cold miseries ; saline unpleasantries, partial wettings and complete soppings ; the whole, or part, to be obtained on terms that placed them within the reach of the multitude. But the multitude seemed to wag their heads derisively and pass on. They were not to be turned aside by the temptations priced upon that board. Some among the stream of homeward-bound looked averse to water, and hurried on. Others looked as if

they never had indulged in the luxury of ablution, but had lived, and sighed, and fulfilled their destiny so far in a state of grime. Even they passed on.

Slowly I crept from the cab, every movement being pregnant with agony, and passed onward through the yawning portals to meet my uncertain fate. As I entered, a gong sounded through the dreary passages, and a head protruded through a pigeon hole on the right. I addressed myself to it in an imploring sort of way, and intimated my wish to be carefully steamed. "Eighteenpence" was the unfeeling reply that came through the pigeon hole in company with a ticket for my guidance. "John ! vapour bath," shouted that same cold voice, and cold echoes repeated them up the empty corridors; and on the stairs stood John, sternly beckoning me to follow him.

He was a man on whom forty summer suns had shone without any very decided success. They had not made him beautiful, nor had they developed him very cruelly. His appearance was singularly impartial—neither for him nor against him; but there was on his face an expression of unalterable sadness, like to the sadness of one whose path had been over battle-fields, or among

shallow graves, where protruding bones seem like skeleton fingers pointing out new victims to Death.

I slowly ascended the stairs, and followed the sad figure in the shirt-sleeves. Each step added to my pain, and each moment to my anxiety. My nerves were collectively performing their functions, irrespective of my personal comfort, and my confidence in their great usefulness became seriously shaken. Still in a feeble excelsior style I continued the ascent, and having gained the first landing, I proceeded with an *andante* movement towards an open door through which John's coatless form had disappeared.

I believe at this moment my feelings were of a purely selfish character. Mrs. Simpson and the youthful results of our union were forgotten ; domestic ties snapped like fiddle-strings ; and in my world just then there were but two people—John and myself.

The room into which the sad spirit beguiled me was small and uncomfortably wooden in its general effect. There was a bath lying down in one corner and a cupboard standing up in another ; behind the door there was a large square corn-bin kind of structure of unpainted wood, and near the window a small dressing-table, supporting a toilet-glass of miserably

meagre proportions. One square yard of unsaleable carpet lay stretched upon the floor, and one cane-bottomed chair, that had the appearance of having been sat upon, leaned against the wall in an apparently exhausted state. Over all there was a green light coming in a weak, melancholy flood through the Venetian blinds, which melancholy light gave a decomposing appearance to John's unhappy features, and imparted quite a sepulchral glimmer to the scene.

The door being closed I proceeded in great pain to hang up my hat and to remove my clothes, with an instinctive knowledge that a condition of nudity would be imposed before the process began. John stood passively behind me, coldly examining (as I thought) my boiling qualities, and calculating, with cruel indifference, the number of pounds avoirdupois that would be missing from the Simpson estate on my return home. At last he was aroused from his attitude of contemplation by the removal of my last stocking, and at once proceeded to the corn-bin. I noticed as he raised the lid that it was pierced with a large hole, on the probable use of which I for a moment speculated; but it was only for a moment, for my attention was directed to the front of the

structure, that all at once opened in the manner of folding doors, revealing to my astonished gaze the inside arrangements. There was certainly nothing suggestive of comfort or ease within those bare boards. A piece of wood laid cross-wise, with a towel spread over it, seemed to represent a seat, but it looked very uninviting to a man whose skin formed his only protection. By this time, however, I had become resigned to any fate that could await me ; and when John requested me by a silent gesture to seat myself within that timbered sarcophagus, I did so with the air of a martyr who looks upon death as the gate of life.

I had hardly time to adjust myself in the position of a heathen god, when the front doors of the bin closed before me, and the upper lid descended overwhelmingly upon me. I shut my eyes at the sudden probability of a final crack on the head, but the next moment, finding myself unharmed, I looked around. My body had disappeared, but my head was protruding through the hole that I had innocently supposed was intended for another purpose. I felt as if I was illustrating a Chinese method of inflicting corporal punishment.

In order the more completely to separate the mind from the matter of the Simpson representative, the sad spirit in shirt sleeves had wrapped a towel round my neck, so that my head had the appearance of being served up like a boar's head at some civic feast.

John had now resumed his attitude of contemplation directly in my front. We were both silent. Within the bin, that now contained my mortal remains, there had set in an alarming hissing, such as might proceed from a nest of infuriated snakes, or a bursted steam-pipe, and with it a sensation of humid heat such as I used to think Professor Anderson's pigeons experienced ere they came so unexpectedly out of the cauldron. For a few minutes I sat perfectly still, gazing inquiringly into John's soulless eyes, as a captive would gaze at his jailor through the dish-hole in the prison door. A more unresponsive pair of eyes I never saw.

There was no comfort in them. It seemed as if tortures and fears like mine were of daily occurrence with him ; and so without sympathy and without hope I sat and simmered, and felt, as the heat increased, that my substance was trickling from a million pores. I don't think it would be possible to feel more defence-

less than I felt then in my utter nakedness. I faltered out a remark pregnant with anxiety, but it brought forth no response from the sad, imperturbable figure in shirt sleeves. The unresponsive eyes turned coldly towards me, gave me one calm, passionless look, and then turned away. Then a long pause again, while the hissing proceeded in the neighbourhood of my unprotected legs, the foot-plate every minute growing hotter, till at length it became unendurable, and I had to lift my feet and keep them suspended in the hot air.

My attitude at that time was, I think, the most undignified it would be possible for a man to assume, but fortunately the box concealed all but my head, and kept the outer world in ignorance of the resemblance I bore to some of the freaks of nature I have seen preserved in spirits. Still I believed even then that for the entire absence of dignity I was compensated by an entire cessation of pain. I began to speculate in my mind whether after all evaporation was not an easy method of releasing the soul from its tenement of clay. True the surviving representatives of the defunct Simpson would be puzzled where to erect the headstone, and where to place their flowers on the future anniversaries of this

melancholy day. True the neighbours would be disappointed when they saw no emaciated mutes and no panoply of woe, no richly-plumed hearse, no prancing steeds, no coffin, and no crowd. It seemed almost like an injustice to them ; but here the thought itself evaporated, for John aroused himself from his reverie, and advanced as if about to remove my head on to a dish. I felt that something that would seriously affect the Simpsons was about to take place ; but he merely applied his thumbs to the swollen veins on my temples, and then turned away without a word, as if he was satisfied I was not done. This time he left the room slowly, as a man with a solemn but settled purpose. It struck me as my eyes followed him to the door that there was an expression on his face, a wearied expression, as if he was tired of death-scenes, and was the unwilling medium of some impending act of retribution. I awaited his return with an anxiety I am sure my face betrayed ; for when, after what appeared to me a long absence, he returned, he looked at me with a glance more rapid than usual, and exclaimed in tones I shall never forget, " You've had enough."

From that moment I have looked upon John as a

man addicted to speaking the truth. From that moment I have looked upon him as a reliable authority on the question of *quantum suff.* Yet, after all, to say that I had had enough was giving but a feeble and insufficient idea of the fulness of my satisfaction. To say that I was grateful to him for his keen perception of the case as it stood would be but expressing the truth in the minimum. I cannot conceive the feeling of gratitude being carried to a further point, for although my sensations had been perfectly painless, yet owing to the weakness induced by twelve months of ill health, and the nervous misery that had come with the light of three hundred and sixty-five days, and the horrible fancies and disturbing dreams that had come with the darkness of each night, I felt unable to endure the enervating effects of the simmering I had been undergoing; and when the emotionless face and the mechanical hands came to the bin-side for the purpose of releasing me from my seething captivity, I felt a renewal of hope that was as delightful as it was unexpected. The towel was removed from my neck, the lid was lifted, the doors opened, and, oh, joy! I saw through the steam that my body was not all bone;

in fact, my appearance, though extremely pitiable, was positively reassuring. Through all the melting down I had experienced I still retained a fair proportion, such as, with the aid of a skilful tailor, might be palmed off upon the world as a manly form. But it was a somewhat timid hope that had come back to me, for as I sat there linenless and unmoved, steaming like an old coacher of the summer days gone by, I wondered if there were other ignominious tortures to follow, and whether John's mysterious movements were for or against. I watched him anxiously as he placed some towels temptingly before my eyes, and I almost deluded myself into the delicious supposition that I had passed through my troubles and still lived. But there was nothing but cold justice in John's eye, as he beckoned me forth from the bin. I felt it would be a waste of innocent feelings to expect mercy from him; so I followed as he directed. I saw the tall cupboard in the corner opened, and I have a dim recollection of hearing a sepulchral voice say, "Go in."

I have found by subsequent investigation that there is no lettering over the doors of that tall cupboard, but I could have sworn that at that moment I saw there the words, "Pray for Simpson's soul."

I was struck by the absence of any special appeal for Simpson's body, which, from my narrow view of the question, seemed to be not without its claim for prayerful regard. I felt that John's behaviour placed him beyond the reach of my forgiveness, and I resisted a foolish impulse to wish him good-bye.

I could never understand how it is that a dying man should care to have another look round at the few trifling objects that lie about him in this world when he knows that he is on the point of entering another; but we see it on the scaffold and we see it at the stake, and as I entered the tall cupboard I knew the sensation myself. I looked round the wooden room, at the coffin-like bath, at the leaden man with a green light resting on one side of his face and a deep neutral shade on the other, then took another step forward and found myself boarded in on every side. But the outer world was not quite excluded from the cupboard. There was an opening that admitted light, and commanded an unnecessarily excellent view of the green and grey features of the solemn attendant. The opening also admitted sound, for I heard the voice that had bidden me go in now bid me hold back my head. I was more docile than the lamb that

is led to the slaughter, and I obeyed the sepulchral voice. As I did so I looked up, but seeing nothing but darkness I prepared for the worst, and closed my eyes. Ten thousand thunders ! there came upon me that instant a splash and a shock that made me leap up into the darkness with a broken gasp, and contracted muscles, and a faint cry that ended in a gurgle ; and the torrent came upon me as I gurgled, and I writhed and twisted, and put my hands up to my face and gave myself up for lost. But the torrent suddenly ceased, the doors of the cupboard suddenly opened, and when I had squeezed the water from my eyes I beheld the motionless form and the pitiless face of John. Had it not been that his severity had made him so distasteful to me, I should have rushed into his arms and clung to him, for I felt that unless somebody intervened between me and my destiny the odds would be considerably in favour of destiny, and the little Simpsons would be sireless.

From that moment, though John's features underwent no change his manner did. Incredible as it may seem, and as it did seem to me, he became positively kind. He took a bath sheet and placed it around me, and rubbed me, and gave me a warm towel, and

put the place in order, and before I could thank him he passed silently away.

Left to myself, I rubbed my bodily remains dry, and then applied the liniment, and rubbed that dry too, and then dressed, for even if there had been other tortures I should have declined them. Long before I had finished I felt a different man. My rheumatic pains had departed, and they did not return. There was a newness of feeling and a sense of purification that were very enjoyable. I felt rewarded for the unnatural treatment I had received, and in my heart I unreservedly forgave John.

I was grateful to find that on my return home there were no perceptible portions of my body missing. Mrs. Simpson said I looked clearer about the skin and brighter about the eye, though she pronounced me damp about the hair, and, if possible, a bigger goose than ever; but, as she always accompanies her uncomplimentary remarks with a kiss, I like them, and although she makes uncomplimentary remarks very often I do not get tired of them. When I told her the history of my first vapour bath, as I have told it here, I saw from certain gleams in her eye that she

would have asked John some terrible questions if he had done as I feared he was doing ; for although ten years have passed since first I called her wife, and although nine little troubles have come upon us with their great pleasures, still our hearts beat together in unison as they did in the twilights long ago. Our hopes and dreams are undivided as they were then, and whenever the spirit of decay steps between us with his scythe, as he will one day do, there will be an emptiness in the life that is left behind, and a grief in the heart that lives, that can neither be told by hot tears nor be lettered upon cold tombs.

The widder wos amoozed at Simpson's trubbles, and larfed as she red 'em ; but she put down the packet without a smile, fur the larst fu lines stole intu her hart, and softened her luk.

" It's all in the same handritin," she sed, thotefully, " but it don't sound the same as the poem, except the little bit at the end. He must hev bin a strange mixture," she added, lukkin intu my face fur a korroberatin luk.

"Yes," I sez, "men air strange mixtures. I've knowd sum as yu kud pull intu pieces, but yu kuddent pull a groan out frum 'em. Them same men hev kried quarts at the deth cf summot they luvd."

"I kan't endure seein a man weep," sed the widder, mournfully.

"It means a gud deal if he's a *real* man," I sez ; "a woman's greef kums out with her tears, but a man's life kums out with his. Women kry tu often tu du thur selves any vilent harm. It takes a gud strain tu bust a hart."

"Hulloa," I sez, takin up the next packet, "here's more vusses. Let's get our handkerchers reddy."

The packet wos labeld, "Echoes," and, like the other, wos dated 1866.





E C H O E S .



ING that sad song again, for it brings back to
me

The memory of hours passed away ;
It comes like the echo of music I heard,
When the young heart was glad, and the life page
unblurred
By the tears of an after day.

'Tis the song which she sang in the still eventide
As we stood 'neath the starlit sky ;
And it seems when 'tis ended again I should see
The tear in her eye, and the smile she gave me,
In sweet hours of rapture gone by.

O ! the heart that I loved has been hushed into sleep,
And the voice that was sweetest is gone ;
And the stars seem to mourn, as the night winds tell
The message they bring from a far away bell,
That for ever seems tolling on.

Yet that sad plaintive song, like an echo of joy
Borne back o'er the dull lapse of years,
Brings a dream of the past, that the heart loves well,
Though 'tis mingled with sorrow the tongue cannot
tell,
Or eyes weep away with their tears.

The widder's vise trembled as she red these vusses,
and she put 'em aside without a word. I wos busy
koffin, fur the poetry ketched sum bakky smoke in my
swaller, and ny choked me.

The widder's eyes wos beginnin tu luk red. Her
tender hart kuddent stand quiet, listenin tu another's
sorrers. I thote she lukked prettier than any woman
I ever see as she tried tu smile at me thru her tears,
and leaned her face on her hand.

"I don't think I shall be abul tu sleep tu nite, Mr.
Goff; I feel so sad," she sed plaintively.

"It'll take summot more than poetry tu keep me
awake," I sez. "Poetry jenrelly sends me tu sleep."

"But think of him dyin in a 'Sylum. What he
must hev suffurd!" she sighed.

"It's very 'ard," I sed, touched by this new vu of the subjeck. "Very 'ard! Sum men seem tu get more'n thur share of suffurin in this world—sum less."

"Everythin hez bin wisely orderd," she replide solumly.

I thote of Mariar and my wastid life, and of sum peple as hed never pade me, and thur wastid lives; and I wonderd if it kud be so.

I tuk up the next packet to change the subjeck, and fund it labeld "A run with the hounds."

"This is more in *my* line," I sez. "He kan't be melankoly in this 'un," and I parst it tu the widder with a air of triumf, and then leaned bak in my chair tu listen.





A RUN WITH THE HOUNDS.

“**H**E hounds meet at Ystrad this morning. Shall we go?” asks my friend and host as he rises from the breakfast table and walks towards the window overlooking the Vale of Clwyd. “You can have the bay mare and I will take Albinus.” I express my delight at the proposal, and the horses are ordered for ten o’clock.

It is a bright morning, but clouds are passing across the sky, and shadows are gliding over the broad breast of the mountain ranges to the east of this charming valley. There have been storms during the night, and the gathering clouds foretell more. The little stream in the lowland shines like silver as the sunlight rests on it, and the hill sides are diapered with the russet of the ferns that are dead, and the

bright green of the gorse bushes that have not yet lost their blossoms. Miles beyond the mountains are lost in mist, and their forms seem to melt into phantom shapes that suggest fancies of a matterless world. High above us is the old ruined castle, with its outer walls standing upon the steep rock and nestling among the luxuriant ivy that has clung around them for centuries ; and far away in front of us are the gentle undulations of Ystrad, with the white square modern hall, surrounded by leafless trees and broad sweeps of pasture land.

Ten o'clock has arrived, and the horses are at the door. My host appears booted and spurred. He is dressed in the dark green coat of the hunt, while I am fortified with top boots and a reefer.

"The mare has a tender mouth, but ride her with a light hand and she will please you," observes my friend, as he springs lightly into his saddle, and pats the neck of his favourite chestnut.

I have not followed the hounds for years, but have almost shut my eyes to all else save the cruelty of the sport; yet as we trot down the gravel drive and out into the lane, I feel the old enthusiasm, and the old love for the chase, come

upon me as strongly as ever. The beautiful animal bears me swiftly along with a splendid action, and seems impatient to try its speed.

We soon reach the foot of the hill on which the picturesque town of Denbigh stands, and proceed along the turnpike road, with Ruthin eight miles in our front. Suddenly diverging to the right, we enter the long lane that leads to Ystrad, having on our left hand a broad stretch of landscape, and on our right a pretty view of the town on the hill.

We are joined by other horsemen, and proceed leisurely to the hall, where all meet preparatory to entering upon the campaign. There are several ladies present in carriages, but none on horseback. The field is composed of a deputy-lieutenant, and officers, professional men, clergymen's sons, and gentlemen-farmers ; dressed in various costumes, and generally speaking fairly mounted. The signal is given to start, and huntsmen and hounds move rapidly away eager for the sport.

A broad stretch of ploughed land is the scene of the first cast. Other fields extend beyond and around it, and the view from the road on the top of the hill we have reached is a fine one.

But the rain comes down at intervals in heavy showers, and the sky is laden with clouds that are coming from the south. A stiff breeze is springing up, and I feel cold as I sit quietly looking at the wet, cheerless country around, waiting for a find. The ploughed lands are soft and splashy, and the furrows and ditches are full to overflowing. It is hard walking and heavy riding, yet we do not mind it, and the gallant little horse of the huntsman gallops over the sloppy earth, again and again, fairly hiding his legs in the splash as he flies along. The other horsemen move quietly down the roads, which are perfect rivers of mud, and await the signal to join in the chase.

All is silent for a time; then we hear a well-known sound as the foremost dog catches the scent; the others quickly follow, and now there is the full music, so grateful to the huntsman's ears. A hundred paces in front of the dogs the startled hare is flying from her hiding-place, frightened by sounds she perhaps has heard before. Rapidly she bounds along, in a succession of jumps, over the rough ridges of newly-turned clay, and climbs the slope at our feet. Suddenly she turns to the right, then downwards, and again upwards across the broad brown field, through a thick hedge,

over the pasture, down into a patch of low land, then across the white road into a timbered acre or two at the foot of the slope. Meanwhile the dogs, with their noses near the ground, are patiently following the scent. While on a straight run they follow quickly, but at a turn they are for a moment puzzled, yet it is only for a moment ; the line is caught again, and the foremost dog is treading in the footsteps of the hare. On through that same gap in the hedge, and swiftly over the green field, down into the low ground, unerringly they fly along, as if they saw their victim beyond ; and now as they rush along there are broken sounds of music from mouths that thirst for blood, and there are twenty anxious faces that watch them, and twenty eager horses that are impatient to join in the chase. But the squadron is not yet formed. Some are here galloping over the green slopes, some there dashing along down the narrow roads, some mad-brain heading the hare amid the hearty curses of trained sportsmen ; men on foot running like maniacs, others less ardent climbing some vantage ground, and an old farmer on the highest stump looking through a telescope a yard long.

Down and down they go into that lowest patch of

green, and as the dogs pass into the plantation there is an ominous silence, and every ear is strained to catch another cry from the puzzled hounds. Horsemen halt, foot followers come up to the front, and the squadron anxiously awaits the signal to charge again. Hark ! there is a yelp, and another, and now the welcome chorus. The scent is once more caught, but there is no full cry, no wild galloping over straight miles of country ; the hare has again turned, and is coming towards us, the dogs rapidly following on the track. Now she passes through a high hedge that will try the horsemanship of many. Over goes the dun with its gallant rider, and close behind it comes the brave old chestnut that jumped these fences fifteen years ago ; away they fly over the dull green field beyond, leading the line of horses that follow in the jump. The handsome gray refuses the hedge, and turns down with others into the lane. Such an animal, with a stout heart upon it, should run in a straight line.

Every face is now turned towards the hill-side, thickly timbered with pines, and margined by a broad winding stream at its foot. The hare has rushed there to find a hiding-place, but closer and swifter follow the terrible foes, sure as retribution and unerring as

destiny; closer and louder sound the yelps of the blood-thirsting pack, and there under the pines, where she hopes to find safety, she will die. Onward among the bare trees sweep the sanguine hounds, maddened by the joy they find in the keener scent, and the coming death scene, with its brief feast of blood lapped warm from their torn victim. The horsemen linger on the outskirts of the cover, which they cannot enter, and move along in the direction of the fierce sounds, which the breezes bear from the hounds, that are each moment growing wilder in their horrid rapture. But the chase is almost at an end. Each stride brings the pack nearer to their prey, and now, as the tired hare sees her pursuers, her eyes start from their hot sockets with an agony of fear. She makes a final bound for life down the abrupt rocks that cross her path ; but it is in vain—the pitiless dogs are crowding after her, and filling the cold forest with their savage discords. In a moment more they are upon her, and she dies, torn in pieces by a dozen mouths, that devour their prey ere the straggling horsemen reach the scene of their hurried banquet.

Strange ! that as I leaned against a tree, with my arm through the bridle, and my hand upon the neck

of the proud mare, I should feel ashamed of being in the picture. Strange! that just then laughter should sound discordant, and smiles should seem cruel. Strange! that the pines should sigh, as if they sorrowed over the passing of so small a life.

Hark! Once more the huntsman's horn rings through the damp air, and is echoed back by the damp hills.

The unsatisfied dogs are called away while they are yet licking the blood from their large loose lips, and again they are led to the broad ploughed field to cross another scent and to run another course, for the agony of one little hare is too short for the pleasures of one long day.

The next follows in nearly the same direction, but the hounds are baffled among the pine trees, and she escapes. A third is sought amid a drenching rain, and after we have crossed the swollen stream which carries the dogs down upon its foaming surface, the well-known cry of the harrier is once more heard, and the wild excitement of the horsemen is again renewed. I forget the cruelty and the scene of blood; the hounds are in full cry and other horsemen are ahead. The brave mare that carries me does not

like the splash of hoofs she can pass, but rushes onward to the front, and gallantly flies over hedge and ditch without a miss, needing neither whip nor spur. Her great heart cannot brook defeat, but gamely she works her way to the head of the now straggling line. Onward over fields that slope down towards the valley, and over streamlets that are swollen into deep torrents, and over hedges that are naked and black, but thickly jewelled with rain drops trembling on every spray, and sparkling in every fitful sun-gleam. Away over the sodden turf and the soft wet clay, caring not for wind or rain, forgetful of danger, wild with excitement, and madly revelling in the invigorating ecstasy of the chase. But the dogs are too swift, the doomed hare too slow, the pleasure too brief. Every stride is beginning to tell. The hounds are gaining rapidly on their victim, and the life of the beaten hare is drawing fastly to its close. "Up!" it is the last fence, and bravely is it taken. The foremost dog now in the centre of the sodden field draws close to the hare, and makes its final spring. There is a chorus of merciless cries, a surging circle of dogs round a bloody centre, a mangled, lifeless form, a licking of lips, and it is all over.

And now homeward through the rain, well soaked and well splashed, we trot briskly along. I am over head and ears in love with the beautiful bay that has carried me so willingly and so well. I feel the bloom upon my face, and the fresh blood in my heart, and an appetite that when I am cupboardless I shall pray not to have.

* * * *

That evening I fell asleep in the firelight, and strangely I dreamed. I saw myself dashing along at the head of the horsemen, with the hounds in front gaining upon the hare, and the country passing, as I had seen it that day; and on and on we flew, and the sunshine lit up the earth till it seemed more lovely than the land I had known. Away over the flowered fields and the blossomed hedgerows, 'neath trees that bloomed with the bloom of eternal summer, and by the side of streams that flowed musically over the glittering rocks, and along lanes that were full of fragrance, and by the side of waters that were full of joy. The cry of the savage hounds broke horribly upon my ear as I drank in the delicious music of the birds that sang aloud in that lovely land. Yet still I followed the terrible sounds, and still the doomed

hare flew on in her wild terror, with glaring eyes and bursting heart, till—oh, merciful Powers! there came a sudden blaze of light that seemed to open in our path, and strike us for an instant, blind. The hare leaped up and fell; the dogs, checked suddenly in their flight, slid on, as they crouched in fear; the horse that bore me reared up and pawed the light, and then, as if spellbound, sank upon the earth and stared. I stood astride the fallen steed, trembling in half blinded terror, with my face turned wonderingly towards the mystery that had come before me. Then the splendour opened, and there came forth from the avenue of glory an Angel of Pity, bright from the Pavilion of the Throne. I bowed my head and sank upon my fallen horse, and when I looked again towards the light I saw the Pitying Angel bending sadly over the panting hare, and I heard a voice, the like of which I had never heard on earth, ask, “Who is he that seeks to take thy little life, and in his wantonness would blot thee out for ever from among the fair creation?” Then I buried my burning face in the horse’s mane, and the dogs hid their cruel fangs among the flowers, and the birds broke off their song and sang to us no more; and when I dared to look

again towards the light, I saw a tear gathering in the Angel's eye as she raised the sinless hare tenderly in her arms, and looking at me with a sad reproach, passed again through the cloudlike portals of the glory whence she came.

It was only a dream, yet it left a vision in my eye and a feeling in my heart that seemed to sadden the memory of the hunt that day, for beyond the recollection of the wild delirium of the chase and the joy of rushing to the front, there comes to me the loud yell and the little cry I have heard before—a cry that denotes agony, and a yell that proclaims death; and even though the life that passes has no share with us in the shame and sorrow, or the pain and pleasure of our world, yet to me a joy is sullied when it is purchased with the price of suffering, even though it be only the dying agony of an unoffending hare.

“Poor little wee thing!” sed the widder, with a tender smile, that wud hev bin almost tu much fur a man. “How happy it must hev bin nestlin close tu the anjel’s hart.”

"I wish he hedn't sed anythin about that dream," I sez: "it's made me want tu nestle, fur *I've* bin a gud deal worried," and I sot lukkin intu the fire as blazed away as cheerful as if the parst hed bin the most amoozin event as ever ockurred.

"Yu must be 'pashunt," she sed. "Thur may be an angel watchin over yu at this moment. We kan't tell."

"Anjels don't seem tu take much interest in ile and drugs," I sez. "No latur than yesterday a pusson died, as owed me twenty pounds, and he's left nothin behind him except his mortal remains, and a krowd of sorrerin krediturs tu mourn thur loss. But we kan't interfere with the parst, so let's perceed with the futur," I added, takin up another packet, and openin it reddy fur the widder tu read. It wos numberd with the figger 5, and wos headed, "In the Twilight."





JN THE TWILIGHT.



NCE more in the home of happier years,
With the twilight shades around !
While the dark sad trees, like mourning plumes,
Stand dropping their tears on living tombs,
Where all joy lies dead, but love still blooms,
Like a flower on an old grave mound.

Ah, me ! how quickly the years go past !
How swiftly the hours go by !
It seems but a day—yet, years have gone,
Bearing their sorrows and joys along !
But leaving behind sad echoes of song,
That linger 'tween earth and sky.

And out from the past there seem to come
Sweet sounds, that the lime trees know,
And music, that never will cease to dwell
In the heart that cherished and loved it well--
Ay, loved too deep for the tongue to tell,
In the long, long, long ago.

And far in the solemn and silent night,
With the moon and stars o'erhead,
The eyes that weep, and the heart that's sad,
Keep their watch for the visions that made them
glad,
'Ere eyes grew dim, or the brain grew mad
With love for the love that's dead.

But tears may fall from the eyes that watch ;
'And grief may throb in the brain,
'Till the heart grow cold, the eyelids close,
And the brain find rest in its long repose.
Sad dreams will rise from the river that flows
Through life, and bring anguish again.

"How is it," I sez, seein the widder lukkin very silent, "that when a man hez anythin on hand in the way of greef as he puts it out in vusses?"

"I think it must be that they ken put so much in so fu words," replide the widder, tryin tu sigh away the effex of the poetry.

"That's jest it," I korroberated. "If they tride it in proze, they'd never know when tu stop. I've

'knowd peple rite fur a hole lifetime and never say anythin ; in fak, very fu on 'em du say anythin."

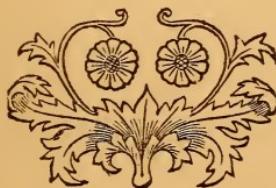
"I ken skarsley bleeve as the poor gentleman as died in the 'Sylum rote all these papers. Still thur all in his handritin," sed the widder, takin up the next packet, and lukkin at it kuryusly.

"Is it poetry?" I inqwired.

"No," she replide, "it's proze; it's called, 'My Landlady.'"

"Then," I sez, "if it's proze, his landlady wosn't a anjel like—." I finished the sentence with a luk as seemed tu ring thru the house.

The little hand as held the packet trembled, and the face that bent ovur it blushed, and the sweet vise warbled as the widder began tu read packet No. 6 :—





MY LANDLADY.

MY landlady is rather fat, and quite forty. She looks as if she had once been young, and when young, fair; but time has toned down the lustre of her eyes, and sobered the expression of her face. She now smiles the smile of a matron, and speaks of her grandchild without wincing.

Ten years of widowhood have proved that her late husband, though a most estimable man, was not indispensable to a continuance of her life; yet she mourns him still, and in certain moods she fairly revels in a flood of eloquent eulogiums, that make me regret, with her, that the world cannot produce another like unto him.

The history of her life, which has been presented to me in a very fragmentary form, contains many touching passages illustrative of the cruel operations

of Time. From a confidential communication she made to me at our first interview, it appears that she was originally intended as an ornament for a much higher position than that in which she now shines.

Fortune at one time smiled upon her house, but "smiled only to deceive." A succession of disasters sapped the ancestral fabric, and down it came. The tide of prosperity receded, and bore away on its sobbing bosom the accumulated glory of six generations of bakers (this I learned from another source). She naturally felt proud of her accomplishments in those palmy days ; of her knowledge of music and skill in painting ; of her love for languages and her graceful dancing ; and the hundred other attainments which had shed a lustre over her girlhood.

In referring to the sad change in her social altitude her grief naturally got the better of her grammar, and she had long ago discovered that unaspirated vowels could not express wrongs like hers. I did not then fully realise the wreck that receding wave of Fortune had left behind, but I know now, and I have wondered with her how she could ever be happy in a position in which monotint studies with a blacking brush were all that compensated her for the loss of her exquisite

painting of the golden days gone by. It was unutterably painful to find that the brilliant execution on the piano of former years had subsided into an inaccurate performance with one finger, and that her lingual accomplishments had gradually undergone a process of disintegration, till the syllabic atoms were all of a heap. Her sylph-like figure had, from causes over which she had no control, persistently developed itself into a form that could never be described by the geometrical definition of a spot. The dancing that had once charmed every manly eye and fluttered every manly heart had slowly but surely declined in grace, and had lost that fascinating power which the confirmed waddle of after years could but imperfectly replace.

No wonder that she sighed when she spoke of the past; it would have been better for her if she could have forgotten it; but it was not to be. Her hands, now so large and red, were once white and small. Each time she looked upon them now, she was reminded of what they had been before she tumbled from her high estate and filled her own coal-box. Then, when the stern duties of the scullery or the kitchen came upon her, day by day, she loved to

forget her whereabouts in a dream of her girlhood ; but no dream has ever interfered with the punctual preparation of my weekly bill.

In caligraphy my landlady is not proficient, but this does not detract from her greatness of character. In her figures she is painfully legible, and I do not think there is a woman anywhere who can add up a column with more freedom than she does. One and two are five, and seven are fourteen, and eight are twenty-five, and the thing is done. I have known her spell cabbage in many abbreviated forms, but there have been no abbreviations in the price. She has written "pade" at the foot of my weekly bills so often that I have begun to doubt my own accuracy. I do not wonder at this when I remember the number of false impressions she has removed from my mind. There was a time when I could not conceive it possible for a man to consume the quantity of provisions that I am assured, by her periodical statements, have been disposed of by my digestive forces week by week ; but it would be madness now to resist the conviction that animal life, so far as my case is concerned, requires more nourishment than is generally considered necessary for one who wears an ordinary-sized waistcoat.

I once ventured meekly to remonstrate with her on her allowing me to ruin my nervous system by an inordinate use of tea. It was not that I then felt any ill effects from my excess, or that I had any very vivid recollections of having indulged in the beverage unusually strong; on the contrary, my urn has never to my knowledge contained a liquid darker in colour than pale brandy; but I had foolishly conceived the idea that the pound of green tea referred to in every week's bill would eventually prove disastrous to the mucous-membrane of the stomach. She evidently endeavoured to avert the danger, for subsequently my tea had no colour at all; and on one occasion having failed to detect any flavour, I curiously looked into the urn, when I found to my surprise that the fragrant leaf had been omitted altogether. She had told me that her memory often failed her, and this little omission corroborated her statement. I blush at my simplicity at this time in supposing that a reduction in the quantity consumed would be followed by a corresponding reduction in the weekly item. Such an absurd idea never entered *her* mind. Misfortune had not yet reduced her to the study of trifles. She looked at things comprehensively, and from the mere

force of habit she could enumerate the items of my next week's bill as well as she could those of the week before. It mattered very little to either of us whether she took sixpence off the tea and put sixpence on "sope;" or whether she reduced the outlay on milk and stuck it on "coles."

Sometimes she condescends to explain why my expenses have an upward tendency, but always apologises for troubling me with the mention of so unimportant a matter of detail.

My landlady's powers of conversation are surprising. I have known her stand at my door with a coal shovel in her hand, and pour forth a torrent of words with an unbroken fluency that could not be exceeded. The process of fire-trimming invariably warms her into speech, but it is not until she has taken up a strong position, with a good line of retreat in the rear, that she really commences the attack.

The subjects of her discourses are not very various, but each one selected by her is treated exhaustively. The unfortunate defectiveness of her memory will, no doubt, account for the trifling contradictions which I have noticed in the recitals of past events given at different times. On atmospheric changes, however, she speaks

with wonderful accuracy, and keeps me regularly posted up in any alteration that may take place ; but the topic on which she loves best to dilate is that connected with the antecedents and future hopes of our neighbours. How she has collected so many facts relative to the stuck-up people on the one side and the struck-down people on the other has ever been a perfect mystery to me. She knows the extravagant proceedings that are ultimately to prove disastrous to No. 3, and the economical measures that are necessary to sustain No. 1. The lodger on the right has incurred her displeasure by wearing two pairs of clean boots per day, and the lodger on the left has excited her admiration by dining in town on Saturdays, and by putting out his gas at nine.

I have often had occasion to think that the meat safe must be very defective in construction, and that the cat, to which I am a stranger, must have been educated secularly, and kept in lamentable ignorance of the inflexible nature of the eighth commandment. I have known ribs of beef carefully removed from my table on Sunday, and placed in the larder for security ; but by some mysterious agency, which my landlady has never satisfactorily explained, they

have been abstracted without my authority, and have never been seen by me again. She has hinted darkly at the dishonest habits of certain vendors of rubbing-stones that frequent the back of our premises at fixed matinal hours, and has also lamented the unfortunate sympathy that is said to exist between them and domestics generally. She has further explained to me the ridiculously simple arrangements which are intended to assist the back door in resisting the efforts of any person or persons burglariously inclined, and she has given me instances of the larder in question having been stripped of everything suitable for conversion into chyme.

It is quite pretty to hear her laugh as she announces a fresh depredation, and I sometimes feel that these periodical cases of petty larceny form cheerful episodes that break up the monotony of every-day life. I blush to own that I was once guilty of imagining that a resemblance existed between the cold beef reported to have been purloined and that which afterwards formed an appropriate centrepiece on the table of my landlady. Happily, I am conscious that such suspicions are very contemptible, and I have often sincerely wished that in order to avoid them my

landlady's tastes were not identical to my own, so that it would be almost impossible for me to recognise in her leg of mutton the remains of my ribs of beef. This similarity in our tastes would, with anyone less respectable than my landlady, have led to dishonest practices ; as it is, the mistakes that have arisen from it have frequently led to a remonstrance on my part and deep expressions of regret on hers.

But there is another circumstance that has occasioned me inconvenience.

It appears that we have residing permanently in our house a number of vagabond mice that indulge in the most criminal habits, and take the most unwarrantable liberties with my property. I have never seen anything to corroborate her statement, yet evidence is not wanting to prove that what my landlady states is perfectly correct. I have known a pot of my preserves more than half demolished in a single night ; and as for sardines, they have on more than one occasion been taken, in the aggregate, box and all. This would indicate that these lawless mice make raids on my cupboard in well organised bodies, and carry on their nefarious operations with a fair amount of ingenuity, and

certainly with considerable success. I once succeeded in tracking them, but it must have been quite an exceptional case, as they had in this instance playfully perpetrated a practical joke, simply transferring the sardines from my chiffonier to my landlady's cupboard, and had not, so far, refreshed themselves with more than the second row. We adopted several ingenious devices that in ordinary cases have proved successful, but in this they were absurdly abortive. Patent traps, rendered irresistible by a fascinating lump of toasted cheese, were placed invitingly for the marauders, but to no purpose. Cheese was evidently not considered a delicacy. We tried bacon, but with the same unsatisfactory result. With a desire to appeal to all tastes we submitted candle, but even that dainty esculent failed to tempt the cunning creatures that had been so long pampered with the contents of my cupboard. Yet they evidently understood our hostile attitude, for they did not return for some little time after the trap and its delicious morsels were pronounced ineffective, and consequently removed. At length, when they did return, they attacked with a vigour unprecedented in the chronicles of their tribe, and at

one time it seemed doubtful whether the chiffonier itself would not fall a victim to their rapacity. An idea floated in my mind. I would secure the temporary assistance of all the cats in the neighbourhood, and declare the whole place in a state of siege ; but the alarming consequences that might result from such a course presented themselves to me so strongly that the strategic measure was abandoned ; and after mature deliberation, I resolved to purchase a Chubb lock, and resort to the disagreeable alternative of locking up. My landlady partly disapproved of the measure, inasmuch as she considered an ordinary lock would do ; but on this point I was immovable, and the cupboard became impregnable. The pantry, however, remains in an undefended state, and my landlady, being of so contented a disposition, hesitates to make any alteration in existing arrangements, but simply sympathises with me in my losses and speaks cheerfully of her own.

Among other weaknesses that have grown upon me in my solitude, I find a partiality for bottled beer at supper has become, perhaps, the most confirmed. Smith, who occupies an adjoining room, is similarly afflicted. He is very unlike me in most things ; but

in two particulars we are twin-like : we order our beer from the same brewer, and we order it in dozens. This resemblance is all the more striking when we consider how utterly we are opposed in all other matters. Smith, for instance, goes to bed very late, and doesn't get up very early. I go to bed two hours before midnight, and rise four hours before Smith. Even in the trifling matter of costume we are most unreconcilable. Smith believes that primary colours are essential to his happiness ; I take an opposite view, and content myself with feeble tertiaries. He exceeds me in an eye-glass, but I overlap him in the size of my umbrella ; and so it did seem strange that on the one question of beer, a question on which so many differ, Smith and I should agree. This agreement, however, has led to some confusion—not as to principle, but as to the quantity consumed.

In one of those lucid moments that seem as a rule to come upon us when we can the least utilise them, it occurred to me, as I sat pondering over one of my weekly bills, that there was some unexplained mystery in connection with the very subject on which I and Smith agreed. It appeared to me that there was no arithmetical reason why the item charged for "bottel

beer" should be gradually enlarged when there was no corresponding increase in the consumption ; yet, on referring to the past, so unpoetically recorded on a file of bills, I found evidence that plainly convicted me of having become, by easy stages, an habitual drunkard.

At the risk of appearing a perjurer in the eyes of any twelve patient and just jurymen, I could have sworn that I had not exceeded my first week's number of bottles in any succeeding week, and that therefore the charge of intemperance and the charge for beer were both unjust. I meekly asked my landlady if she could account in any way for the discrepancy ; but I asked her delicately, for I feared she might think I doubted her integrity, and I knew that she would never have forgiven this.

How could she ?

She went to chapel twice on Sundays, and would not be persuaded to laugh or clean boots on the Sabbath day. She had, too, a missionary-box that never grew heavy, and a Sunday heart that never grew light. I never knew her receipt a bill without concluding the somewhat tedious process with some pious utterances ; nor have I ever known her fail on these

occasions to remind me how hard it is for poor honest people to live.

Notwithstanding her piety, my landlady was a woman of vast domestic experience, and seemed able to grapple with any question however subtle ; and so to her this new question of beer would probably prove a mere trifle, and most easy of explanation. Her first idea, however, was that I must be mistaken. I shook my head sadly but respectfully, as one who had tried that idea before and had found it untenable. She immediately invited me into the cellar and pointed out the place where my bottles stood.

We found that Smith's bottles ranged themselves in dangerous proximity to mine, and the notion flashed upon us that Smith in the hurry of the moment and darkness of the midnight hour might visit the wrong store in mistake. His thirst often remained unsatisfied long after the rest of the household were in bed, and such a mistake was easily made ; so here we examined Smith's case, and finding it suspicious, we condemned him without a hearing, and my landlady voluntarily offered to keep our bottles in different cellars and prevent any further confusion.

The item for drink hereafter resumed its normal insignificance, but just then the butchers raised their prices, as one man, and up went the item of meat. Except on moral grounds, Smith might just as well have gone on with his mistakes, for the weekly total had apparently by this time assumed the immutability so closely identified with the laws that kept down the passions of the Medes and Persians.

It is hard to cook for one, and my landlady, with a frankness that always disarms me, admits it ; yet I do think she considers my happiness too lavishly when in providing me with a Saturday steak and a Sunday chop dinner she places before me enough for a family of ten.

I was taught in childhood to dislike anything approximating waste, and before I had fairly made myself cognisant of the fact that following Saturday and Sunday came the washing day, and following close upon the washing day came ironing day, and after that the charwoman and cleaning day, I not unnaturally experienced remonstrative sensations that were entirely the result of this early portion of my education. Even now it does occur to me that Smith's larder must be but feebly and inefficiently

represented at these domestic festivities, or that the appetites of the working classes must be, relative to mine, in the proportion of three to one, which is giving a high tribute to the gastronomical attributes of the said working classes, a tribute I have certainly, more than once, had reason to suspect is richly deserved. When you see a solitary man toss the bones of two ducks into his fireplace at one sitting, or apply his tongue to the dish after annihilating two or three pounds of tough steak, you cannot avert the reflection that continued competition in such a matter would gradually induce a habit totally at variance with the sober dictates of a well-regulated stomach. Yet it has been my sickening privilege to see the feat accomplished by an unassuming artisan, whose specific gravity was registered under ten stone.

Of course my landlady, being mortal, has her weaknesses. She has a deeply-rooted prejudice against lady lodgers; cannot admire, or respect, a gentleman who buys his own grocery or makes his own tea; disapproves altogether of social gatherings in apartments; never has the courage to put the gas meter on at the full, and is dead against the hall lamp. In extenuation of these trifling weaknesses, it must be

said that ladies *do* ring the bell too often, *do* betray their suspicions in locking everything up, and most certainly *do* correct or explain without the least consideration for a landlady's tender sensibilities. Then, again, think of a gentleman condescending to make his own tea! or buy his own butter! One can scarcely wonder at the unanimity of opinion among all shades and classes of landladies on this point; and I certainly do not wonder that my landlady, with her lofty antecedents and her undiminished love for the noble and the true, should curl her soiled but patrician lips at such a fall from the dignity of manhood. But why she should be so timid of gas and so neglectful of the hall lamp has always been a question beyond me. Then, too, I fail to divine her reason for objecting to furnish my room with a coalbox, unless it is that, in her consideration for my comfort, she prefers seeing that I do not on the one hand roast myself to death, nor on the other hand deny myself a fair amount of warmth, such as the seasons might require. This I should not call a weakness; it is only a peculiarity.

As I have said, these trifling features cannot, and do not, detract from her greatness of character. What are these little failings compared with the number and

strength of her virtues ? Those who know her as I do will bear testimony to their utter insignificance ; they will pity her in her misfortunes, and respect her in her humble sphere, surrounded as it is by evidences of a refinement that even poverty cannot set aside ; they will listen to her monodigital music sorrowfully, and endeavour to imagine what it once was ; they will trace troubles in every aspirated vowel, and blighted hopes in every unaspirated H ; they will see industry in her hands where once they might have seen the marbling of patrician blood ; they will think of the sad workings of time when they see her form, and miss the music of her better days when they hear her voice ; and as for those whose privilege it will be in after time to see her bills and check her addings up, they will but feel with me that it is a pity that poverty should ever come, or that those who have once risen should ever fall.

The widder seemed tu enjoy that packet rite thru,
and forgot all her tears.

“ That brings the histry of the world up intu supper

time," I sez, puttin down my pipe and tyin up the papers we'd red in a bundel by thurselves, and arranin the othurs fur futur akshun.

"I'm glad it wos not a sad wun like sum of the othurs," she sed, risin frum her chair.

"It's jest as well," I sez, "as the gastrik jooses don't kare fur tu much sorrer. It interferes with thurdooties, and then thur's a row in the house, and sumtimes a funeral sets in."

We hed supper and talked of the papers the widder hed red, and then the supper wos kleared away and the readin wos resoomed.

The next packet in order of konsekatif rotashun wos kalled "Sudden Death ; or, Love at First Sight."

"My gudness," I sez, "that's a promisin beginnin. Thur's all the dreds and desires as evur wos, frum the fust of Adam down tu next Kristmas Eve in that 'un."

"I hope it will be a luv tale and end appy," sed the widder.

"It won't be troo tu life if it du," I sez, judgin frum my own experiunts, and sinkin intu profund silents, as she began tu read packet No. 7 :—



SUDDEN DEATH;
OR,
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

A NOVELETTE IN THE MODERN TWADDLE STYLE.



“**C**OUSIN Louie—Mr. Mortimer.”
“ Fred—Miss Staveley.”

The waves heard this upon the sands at Southport.

Mr. Mortimer was myself.

Miss Staveley was —— an angel.

I felt it when I looked through my blushes at the beautiful face, with downcast eyes, ripe cherry lips, golden hair, blooming cheeks, delicately chiselled nose, marble forehead; in a word, the every feature of Miss Staveley. She *was* an angel, and I felt like one unworthy to be in her heaven. Her divine beauty made me for the moment dumb, and when she

raised her blue, tender eyes and looked at me through *her* blushes, I felt that I should like to sit down, for the paralysis of love was upon me, and I was sinking rapidly into that blissful state of wretched imbecility that accompanies the first taste of things celestial upon earth.

It was all so sudden, too. I felt perfectly defenceless.

I had walked about, and had been wheeled about, the world for twenty years, and had looked upon faces that were very fair, and I saw that they were good; but beyond what I had read in medical works, I had no particular reason to believe that Nature had done me the favour to provide me with a heart—a heart capable of such unaccountable things as I had seen recorded in almost every novel published in three volumes. Nor had I in the least anticipated that I should ever be so far lost in the heights of imagination as to fancy myself in Elysium while standing upon the Southport sands. Yet it was so; and I knew it was so, but my tongue refused to utter one word of what I felt. I coughed, and Tom Malperton (whom I shall ever hold responsible for the doings of that day) mocked me. I gave him what I

considered at the time a withering look, but he didn't fade, and when he smiled at Miss Mortimer the withering went back into my own heart. But *she* didn't smile, and I thanked her in my thoughts. Then I felt a little courage come, and go, and then come again, and at last I spoke.

I have no recollection now of what I said, but I remember that my throat was very rough and dry, and I remember, too, that Miss Staveley laughed, and Tom Malperton laughed; but *her* laughing was rich music—Tom's wasn't. And I blushed more than ever, and looked down at a pretty little foot that peeped out from the circle of white embroidery encompassing the hallowed spot of earth on which she stood. Then Tom (whom I was beginning to hate) said something very ridiculous and childish about a resemblance between my face and a red, red rose. I tried to laugh, and felt sick, but I was glad to find Miss Staveley saw nothing amusing in his impertinent reference to my face, and this time I thanked her with my eyes.

Then there came another awkward pause, the most awkward I ever remember. I couldn't raise my eyes from the toe of that little boot, and the angel in front of me

seemed lost in the study of a pebble, a dirty little pebble, that had somehow got upon those almost pebbleless sands, and *would* keep near the end of her umbrella. She turned it over so gently and lovingly that I wished I had been that pebble, that she might so toy with me and forget all else save me. But the wish and the pebble were almost forgotten when Tom Malperton broke out into shameful laughter, and said a thing that made my very soul jump. Could I believe my ears? He asserted I was "struck," and Miss Staveley heard him. He added, he didn't wonder, for his cousin Louie "was a regular stunner."

Oh, how she blushed! She was a trifle hard, too, upon the pebble, and she buried it in the sand, and I felt it would be appropriate to the occasion to shed a tear upon the mound—but didn't.

I have a dim recollection of having said some very silly things, about the waves coming by and by to sob over it, and about the sadness associated with a solitary life by the sea, and about several other things that had no fitness whatever either as to time or place; but when I looked up and saw the hateful smile upon Tom's face, my feeble poetry gave place to an expression that was intended to identify him with the most

stupid of the brute creation. I verily believe that, if he had remained upon the scene much longer, I should have consigned him to a still lower place ; but a sudden idea seemed to strike him. I saw by the twinkle of his eye that mischief was in his thoughts, yet I felt nothing worse than his presence could come.

Although I had liked Tom Malperton well in the days that came before this day, I could scarcely endure his presence now. His manner to his cousin seemed to me painfully familiar. I felt a shock every time he spoke to her, and I was full of indignation when he threw his jokes at me in her presence. Such a change in feeling I had never known before.

All at once, in the midst of one of those lulls in the conversation that came then, as they so often come where people have too many feelings to interpret in too short a time, Tom turned gravely towards his cousin and said, " Will you excuse me this morning, Louie ; I have an important engagement at eleven, and it is now half-past ten. I am afraid I shall be late. Fred will take good care of you in my absence—won't you, Fred, old boy ? " and he turned to me with a look I am afraid Miss Staveley noticed, for she did the red, red rose ; and I have every reason to think I

did the peony as I stammered out something supposed to be indicative of my pleasure in my appointment as Miss Staveley's cavalier.

We stood looking at the retreating figure of Tom Malperton as he walked towards the town, turning round occasionally to wave his hand and shake his fist in the privileged manner of an old friend; and when at last he reached the promenade and was lost to view, it occurred to me that *I* was Fred and that Miss Staveley was Tom's cousin Louie.

She was standing in the same position as when she buried the pebble in the sand; and when I looked down I found the mound gone, and—. Well, I was getting jealous of that pebble; over and over it went; tickled into one place and then tickled back again; looked down on tenderly by those lovely eyes, smiled at by those lovely lips, caressed by the end of *her* umbrella, touched by the sole of *her* foot.

“Ah, me!” I sighed, and she sighed too; but her sigh was an octave higher than mine, and immeasurably sweeter.

There we stood on the sands, with soft murmurs of the sea on the one side, and the soft murmur of the breeze on the other; the flat waste of sand

before us, and the flat spreading town behind us ; the clear warm sun in the clear blue sky, and two hearts that were beating quicker than they had done in their days of loveless rest.

I don't know how long we stood without speaking ; but all at once there came over me a sense of the magnitude of my responsibility, and with it came an unaccountable thirst. I coughed, and tried viciously to swallow something that persistently refused to be swallowed. I would have given a jewel for a lump of ice or a slice of lemon ; a glass of sherry would have been nectar ; a cluster of grapes, ambrosia ; anything to clear my voice, that I might express melodiously the rich music of my mushroom love.

I believe at that moment I must have been standing over at the knees and trembling, as I have seen old cab horses stand and tremble, for the sudden attack of love had made me weak, and had upset all the coolness that I flattered myself I had acquired. I must have been out of sorts, for I cannot in fairness to myself believe that in health I could have been so suddenly reduced to a condition totally at variance with all the estimates I had formed of my strength. I am supported in this belief by the fact that when Miss Staveley at length raised her eyes and looked at

me, she exclaimed anxiously, “Mr. Mortimer, are you ill?”

What a delicious moment! Those sweet, tender eyes were now gazing anxiously at *me*; that little hand was laid on my arm; that young heart was all in a flutter of fear lest I should die. Can you wonder that I should feel worse, when an increase in the graver symptoms brought me such unmeasured happiness, and might destroy for ever the reserve that had existed? Can you wonder that in husky tones I should feebly express a fear that I was about to faint, and that I should try to induce a flabbiness of body and a looseness of limb in support of the idea?

“Hadn’t you better sit down until you feel stronger?” said Miss Staveley, with a look of increasing anxiety that made me happier than ever; and she added, “I will run and dip my handkerchief in the sea, and place it on your forehead; it will revive you.”

As I write this in after days, I am conscious of a blush when I record the fact that I deliberately sank upon the sands, and tried to impart to my body a jelly-fish limpness that would place me beyond the suspicion of acting. I fancy I therein succeeded. Then, too, in addition to my other symptoms, I found

I had sat down in a puddle that the tide had left behind, and no one could possibly believe *that* was a premeditated act. The thickest cloth becomes saturated in time, and so I found, but I didn't in the least care, for I was becoming hardened ; and I felt, as I saw that angel form flying towards the margin of the laughing waters, that my happiness was far too great to be interfered with by bodily sensations of any kind. And when she came back, blushing and out of breath, and placed her cold, wet handkerchief on my brow, and tapped it daintily with her fingers, I sat entranced. What mattered it if the salt water did trickle down my nose, and from my chin, and into my eyes, and down my neck ! I was too bewildered with the circumstance and pomp of love to notice it. The happiness was so great I began to fear it was all a dream, and I tried if I could wake, foolishly forgetting that if it was indeed a vision that had stolen beneath my closed eyelids it would leave me when the eyelids were upraised. But, no ! it was no dream. There *was* water at the end of my nose ; there *was* a puddle on the sand ; and there, too, standing over me, watching the effect of her ministering, *was* the angel I silently adored. She looked anxious still, lest all her ministering should be

in vain, and the reaper should there and then treat me as a flower.

I felt that there was no barrier between us now, that the spell that had held me tongue-tied was broken, that in future we should be at least friends ; and as another hope fluttered in my mind the blood came back to my cheeks, and my heart throbbed wildly and heavily, as if it yearned to leave its own poor casket for a better.

It dawned upon me then that I was in love, *madly* in love with an angel that had come to me in her pity ; in love with a fair creature I had not seen half an hour, and might never see again. The thought reduced me to a state of profound misery, and I believe that if I had been ten years younger I should have thrown my arms around her neck and sobbed for hours.

There I sat, impostor as I was, allowing myself to be treated for an ailment I never had. The very waves seemed to splash their reproaches towards me ; but I cared not—I was happy.

It was such ecstasy to meet her gaze and see her timorous smile, and hear her voice when she asked me if I was better ; but very dreadful to hear me falsely whisper, “No, do it again.”

Then she did turn the handkerchief again and patted it, and ran her fingers through an unruly lock of hair that would come in the way. And when at last I ventured to smile and impress a wet, salt kiss upon her unsuspecting hand, and tell her that I feared years of devotion could not repay such kindness as hers, she blushed more deeply than I had seen her blush before, and seemed to have no strength or feeling left in the little hand I had kissed ; so I kept it in my own, and pressed it, and looked on it passionately, and kissed it again and again. Then all at once she seemed to remember where it was, and withdrew it gently, telling me she was sure I was well now, and saying she thought I might venture to walk a little.

Her words were sweet laws to me, so I took the embroidered lace-edged handkerchief from my burning forehead, and wrung the salt water out of it and tore it in my earnestness, and made a number of very foolish observations apologetically, and did all kinds of ridiculous things that, looked at in the cold, passionless light of after years, appear undoubted evidences of insanity ; but it was the insanity that makes us believe in earth, and yearn less for heaven ; that makes us want no other angel than the one we have

found—no other scene than that in which she moves—no other music than her voice—no other beauty than the beauty of her face—no other treasure than the fulness of her love—no other idol than herself.

I rose very slowly, and very reluctantly, from the damp sand, for I feared that the sympathy I had excited in Miss Staveley's breast would be withdrawn when she saw me numbered once more among the able-bodied ; and in a measure it was so, for when I had brushed all the sand from my clothes, and tried to pull my wet collars into something like a sense of their position, I looked imploringly at her, but found no tender look in return. To my intense mortification she was again calmly looking down, and again tickling that confoundedly happy pebble. I looked for that particular stone days afterwards with a view to vengeance, but I never saw it again. Whether the tide came up and mercifully bore it away into the silent depths of the ocean, or whether it had been gathered by the children whom I had seen playing upon the sands, I can now never know. But it passed mysteriously from the shore.

Then I spoke in a low, tremulous voice : “I am sorry, Miss Staveley, that I am well again, for I was

so happy when you thought me ill and cared for me so tenderly, and—and you forgot all about that peb——.” And then I broke down, and felt that I had said something very childish, and that the reference to a paltry stone was anything but manly.

“ You cannot mean what you say, Mr. Mortimer ; you *did* look ill, but you did *not* look happy,” she replied, still looking down, but evidently a little confused.

“ I swear to you that it is so,” I exclaimed, gazing earnestly into her lovely face, and feeling as if I was about to fly.

“ Hush ! Mr. Mortimer,” she said impressively ; “ there is no tumult here to drown your words, they may rise higher than earth !” and a shade came over her face that made her look more heavenly than ever.

“ They *must* rise higher, or *you* would not hear them,” I replied, forgetting all my previous confusion and timidity, and trying to flash out my soul upon my tongue. “ I would give up all this world can offer in exchange for the light of your eyes, and the pressure of your hand, and the music of your voice, and——”

“ Stop ! Mr. Mortimer.”

Oh, the lovely artlessness of that soft little hand

that was placed upon my mouth. It stayed a torrent of words that came like an overflow from the heart. I don't know what I should *not* have said if it had not been there to press back the stream and bid me pause; but I kept it to my lips, and kissed it, and would not let it go; and then there was pleading, and reasoning, and questioning, and at last calmness; but I still held that little warm, soft hand, and vowed I would *never* let it go.

"Would that I could win your heart as I have won your hand," I exclaimed, "for then we should never part, even though the mighty ocean came upon us and overwhelmed the earth. In death, the grasp of this hand would be tightened, and the souls that passed upward together would never be torn asunder."

"Oh, why do you speak thus?" said Miss Staveley, trembling very much, and looking as if her eyes were full of tears, and her head bending down still lower as if to hide them.

"Because I love you—madly, passionately, devotedly love you! I loved you the first moment I looked into your eyes, and I shall love you for evermore. Years ago I saw you in visions that came to me in the dead of night, and in after-time I felt a yearning for what I

had seen in those dreams. But I never dreamt that it would come again in the sunlight as it has come now ; I never dared to hope that the phantom that appeared to me in my sleep would ever return in the warm palpitating beauty of life that I can press thus."

But, just then, that also was not to be, for Miss Staveley sank fainting upon the sand, and it was my turn to run to the laughing water, and bring the sopped handkerchief to the pale brow, and watch the drops of water running down her neck, and sparkling on the end of her nose, and toppling over the forehead into her eyes ; and it was her turn to look on me as a ministering angel, and gaze up into my face with a smile of thankfulness, and (oh, that I could dare think so) to keep ill as long as she could.

How those moments fled ! I knelt by her side, pleading for my love, and drinking in the sweet music that fell from her lips. We spoke of our childhood, of our young sorrows and early joys, of the years to come, and of the new hopes that had sprung up within our hearts, and long we sat in that delicious dream of love. Then a shadow fell upon us, and it was Tom Malperton's turn to laugh at us again, and to interrupt our happiness by his untimely appearance ; but I

could smile with him now, and there was a beautiful autumn morning some months after when his presence was not an interruption, and when his laugh sounded like the music of old times ; for the love that budded into life that day went on flowering in the sunshine on the sands, and the fair promises I gave in the fulness of my heart were followed by more solemn vows given in calmer moods. So at last, when that autumn morning came, Tom Malperton came with it, as my best friend, to see his cousin Louie as Miss Staveley for the last time, and to hear me promise to love and cherish her, as I meant, and mean to do, and to see me driven away from tears, good wishes, and old shoes, with my blushing wife—his charming cousin Louie, whom he still persists in calling a regular stunner.

She is more, for years afterwards, as I write this, she is the mother of a number of little Mortimers, all of whom are very noisy, very fond of dirt, and death on jam.

“Oh, that is purty !” exclaimed the widder gleefully. “I’ve a great mind tu read it agen.”

"Thank yu," I sez, feelin as if I'd hed enuff; "I don't think we shall hev time tu-nite. Evenins air very okkurd in that respeck. Thur's no stretchin 'em tu soot individool voos."

"But isn't it purty?" she asked, wishin tu bind me tu sum pertikler opinyun on a subjeck as interested her so much.

"Well," I sez, "puttin aside konsekwnces, it is sumwot agreeabul; but, as a rool, anythin as appeals tu the hart treats the hed as if it hed nothin tu du with the questyun. When a man's in luv, his opinyuns on anythin livin must be receeved with kon-siderabul kawshun."

"Does luv muddle a man?" asked the widder with surprige.

"Muddle him," I sez; "why it makes a downrite fool on him. It seems to treat reason like rubbige, and changes a pusson tu that extent as his dearest frends wudden't kno him if he hedn't any distin-guishin features in the way of kostoom."

"I shud like tu see yu in luv, Mr. Goff," sed the widder larfin.

"It wud be a magnificent specktakle, as shud be enkouraged with slo fiddlin and fireworks," I sez,

fur onct in my life jokin on a seryus subjeck. "I bleev I shud be as onreliabul as the rest on 'em."

"Is this the larst?" she sed, in disappinted tones, as I handed her sum vusses called "Villiam's Lament," as formed the larst packet.

"Yes," I sez, "that's the larst, and it sounds like another sad 'un; yet I didn't notis any jin spots on it. Praps he hedn't any more tu shed."

VILLIAM'S LAMENT.



Aint it a sin, when a feller hez bin
A doin his best to prosper and win,
By backin a hoss fur an 'andfull o' tin,
Fur that hoss to deliberately die.

It wouldn't a mattered so much as it do,
If I hadn't lost all, but stuck to a few;
But things as they stands looks uncommonly blue,
For my pig, so to speak, is no more.

The facts air as follers, and stubborn they be:
If the hoss had a run into one, two, three,
That hoss wud a bin nigh a "pony" to me,
For I backed him to win, and a shop.

And if he'd a won, as that hoss could hev done—
Fur a better I never see stripped in the sun—
I'd a pulled off a pot of two hundred to one,
And hev started a hoss of my own.

But—R!—I'm fair sick, when I think of how thick
I put down the shiners, and lost by a trick;
Fur there wasn't a hoss in the world that could lick
The great hoss that I backed fur to win.

Now look, *here's* a puss! why it looks vus and vus,
Fur there isn't a copper, there isn't a cuss.
A'ch! William! you'd a better bin drivin your buss,
Than a backing a dead-un that day.

The widder sed she didn't quite understand
“William's Lament,” and thurfore didn't enjy it like
the othurs. I guv her the meanin of it, and she red it
agen, and liked it better; but sed she enjyd the
poetry as made her sad the most.

Whot a strange and luvly blessin is a woman.
It wos gettin late, fur the time hed parst quickly, and
we hed bin interested in the ritins of the poor ded
gentleman. The widder sed she felt sorry thur wos

no more tu read, and asked me if I thote as Jerrybim hed any other packets among his rubbige.

"I'll see tumorrer," I sez. "Jerrybim's jest as likely tu hev a heap on 'em as he's kept tu lite fires with. He'll guv 'em tu me if he hez, fur his feelins on the subjeck won't amount tu more than tuppence a pound, and Jerrybim's an old frend."

The klok struck twelve afore we hed finished talkin ovur the papers the widder hed red. They hed made an impreshun on her, and she spoke very tendurly of the poor mad riter as hed parst away, fur she thote "it wos sad, very sad," she sed, "that wun as hed luvd as he hed luvd, and hed dreamed the bitter dreams as he hed dreamed, shud go out intu the dark mystery so yung, and shud leave the beautiful sunshine, and the sweet flowers and the delishus fragrance, and the richest muzik of the erth behind. But," she added solumly, "Perhaps 'tis best, fur who ken tell whether the pathway of his futur wud hev bin thru tears, or whether the added days of his sad life wud hev bin spent whur light and sunshine, and flowers and fragrance, never kum."

THE END.

NOTICE.



ELIJER GOFF, du hereby guv notice that I'll not be responsibul fur any debts inkurred by Mariar my wife, so dear (at any price) tu me ; nor fur any debts inkurred by any of her unhappy relashuns, by blud or marrige, inkloodin the undersined, who takes this opportunity of returnin thanks fur all bad debts bestowed ontu him durin the parst year.

In solicitin a kontinnerance of futur favors, he, the onct afore-menshund undersined Elijer, du hereby respeckfully inform his kustomers and frends that he hez jest made arrangements fur openin sevrel new mines of Turkey rhubob in parts whur its not immejutly required fur the bowls of the erth ; and hez at the same time sekured sevrel splendid kod liver ile springs in Ameriky, which 'll enabol him tu bring that delishus beverage within the means of anybody as ken afford tu pay fur it.

In konsequence of the enormus demand fur elektricity, he, the twice afore-menshund undersined E. G., is appintin agents tu represent him at the North Pole (poor relativs and miserabul bakbiters preferred). He hopes that by konstant inattenshun tu his bizness they will give every satisfakshun, and that thur virtoo will be its own reward.

(Sined)

ELIJER GOFF.

ELIJER GOFF:

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The Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-two Thousand.

London : Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.



UR nervusness, yuthful giddiness, hopeless melonkoly,
xtreme poverty, and jenrel debility,

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Fur pains in the bak, legs, arms, hed, chest, sides, shoulders,
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fraud,

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drinkin, sleepin, and totul protrashun,

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enjymnt,

READ “ELIJER GOFF.”

Fur loss of membry, loss of appytite, loss of temper, loss of
fortune, loss of presents of mind, loss of sitooashun, loss of life,
loss of evrythin,

READ “ELIJER GOFF.”

Fur the sake of him as luvs his publisher, as only a orthur
ken,

READ “ELIJER GOFF.”

TESTIMONIALS.



WENTY yeers ago my father bruk his neck. Fur a long time he wos konfined tu his grave. At larst my mother wos persuaded tu read "Elijer Goff," and I am appy tu say she ken now walk without krutches.

J. C.



JENTLEMAN of affluents, with limited means, hevin been in want of money fur sum time, borrerd a trifle frum a frend, which he wos onabul tu repay. Fur five and twenty yeers it prayd upon his mind. He lost all taste fur work, hed no appytite fur pure water, kuddent sleep before midnite, forgot all his poor relashuns, wosn't abul tu enjy a bad sermont, didn't agree with anybody as tuk the trubble tu diffur frum him, kudn't pay his way, and didn't. At larst, in a lucky moment, he wos indoosed tu read "Elijer Goff," and all at onct a rich relashun dyed, and left him a large fortune tu mourn his ontimely end.

M. D.

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"It is full of humour, and well worthy of perusal. *Judy* will be glad to meet its author again."—*Judy*.

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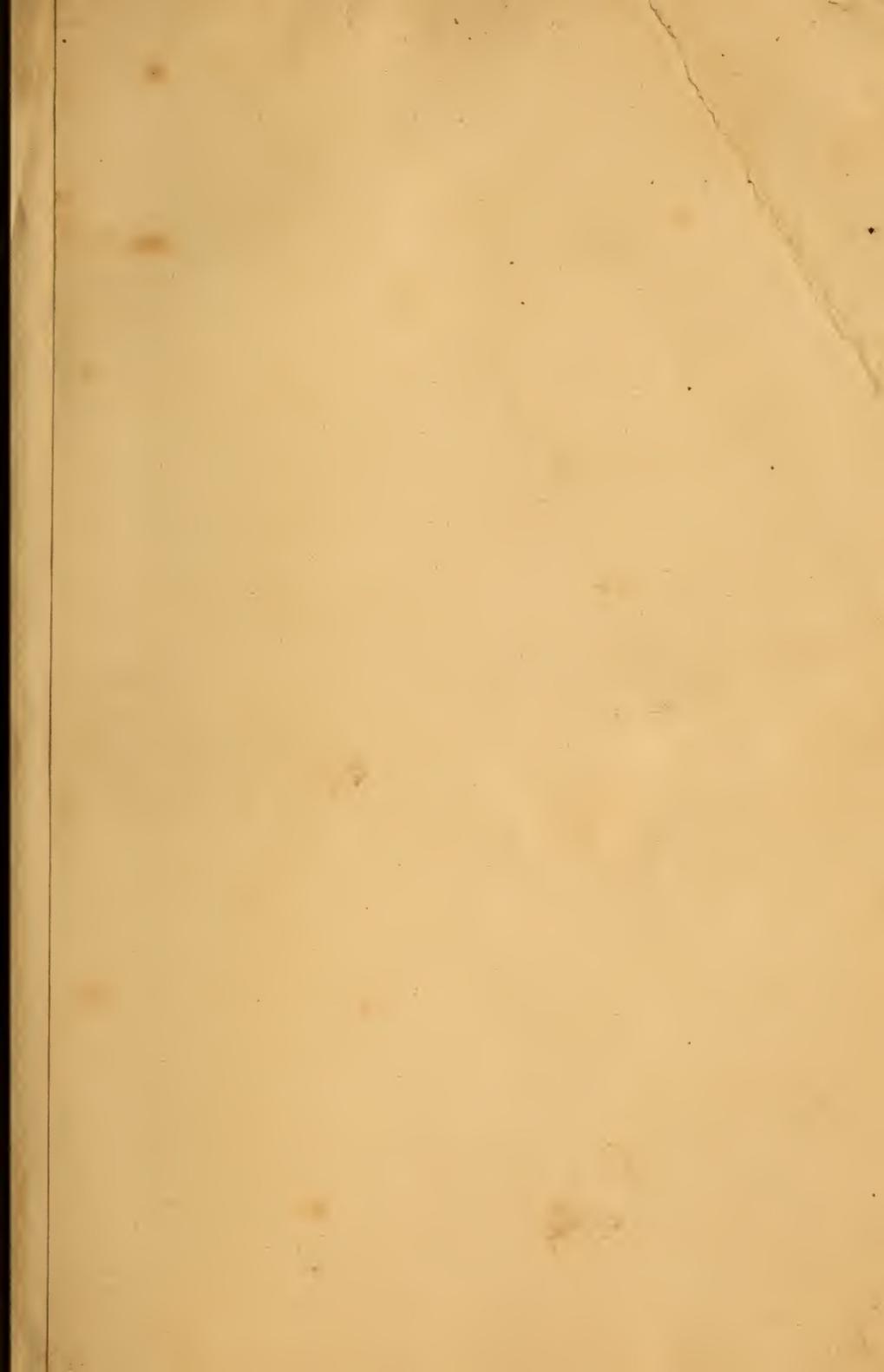
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